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R. BRVNSCHVIG J. SCHACHT

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G.-P. MAISONNEUVE-LAROSE
PARIS
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DE L'EXPRESSIVITÉ DE DEUX PHONÈMES ARABES : *HĀ' MĪM*

Le miracle coranique — le seul que revendique l'Islām primitif — illustration s'il en fut de la puissance magique du verbe, le sentiment de la racine et la solidité des consonnes qui la composent, tout incitait les anciens théoriciens de la langue arabe à traiter du pouvoir évocateur du mot, c'est-à-dire des rapports audio-psychiques du signifiant et du signifié. A côté de leurs remarques qu'on négligera sur l'onomatopée (1) origine du langage et l'expressivité de certains paradigmes (2), il en est qui traitent de la valeur suggestive de certains sons.

Sans contester le postulat de la linguistique moderne affirmant que « le signe linguistique est arbitraire » (3), ni affirmer qu'il y a « des rapports nécessaires entre le son et le sens », il est indéniable que les sujets parlants peuvent, à l'occasion, associer au sens « l'aspect phonique des mots » et que « le mot une fois fixé

(1) Pour le fondateur de la lexicographie arabe al-Ḫalīl b. Aḥmad (IIe siècle H./VIIIe) c'est en fonction du bruit qu'ils font que le *ǧundub* (espèce de sauterelle) a été appelé *ṣarr* et le *bāzī* (faucon) *ṣarṣar ;* Ibn Ǧinnī, *Ḫaṣā'iṣ*, I, 544 ; *Lisān al-'Arab*, VI, 119-120 ; *Tāǧ al-'Arūs*, III, 330.

(2) Sībawayhi (IIe siècle H./VIIIe), fondateur de la grammaire arabe, affirme l'expressivité du thème de noms d'action *fa'alān ; Ḫaṣā'iṣ*, I, 544. Pour Ibn Ǧinnī (IVe siècle H./Xe), mu'tazilite comme son maître Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī qui l'enseigna vingt ans, le langage est d'institution humaine et a pour origine les onomatopées ; *Ḫaṣā'iṣ*, I, 39 ; Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, I, 10-47.

(3) Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, Paris 1916, 102, 103. Le signifiant est à distinguer du symbole, car « le symbole a pour caractère de n'être jamais tout à fait arbitraire ; il n'est pas vide, il y a un rudiment de lien naturel entre le signifiant et le signifié » ; par arbitraire, il faut entendre qu'il est immotivé « c'est-à-dire arbitraire par rapport au signifié avec lequel il n'a aucune attache naturelle dans la réalité ».

par la tradition indépendamment de toute intention imitative une certaine convenance peut apparaître entre sa forme et la notion qu'il exprime, lorsque son caractère phonétique s'y prête » (1).

Ibn Ǧinnī (2) a étudié la relation entre le mot et le son, le signifiant et le signifié. Voici quelques exemples de ses interprétations choisies parmi les moins discutables et où il explique une différence sémantique entre deux racines trilittères ayant deux radicales identiques par l'expressivité de la troisième qui diffère. Selon lui *ḫaḍima*, manger des aliments mous *(raṭb)*, se distingue de *qaḍima*, manger des aliments secs *(yābis)*, parce qu'a été choisi le *ḥā'* à cause de son relâchement *(raḫāwa)* pour exprimer la mollesse, et le *qāf* en raison de sa dureté *(ṣalāba)* correspondant à ce qui est sec. C'est parce que le *ḥā'* serait plus fort que le *ḫā'* que *naḍḥ* signifie un arrosage léger et *naḍḫ* un arrosage fort. L'emphase différencierait *qasm*, partage, division, et *qaṣm*, rupture, brisure. Dans l'expression *šadda l-ḥabla*, il a tenu la corde, la chuintante symboliserait le bruit du frottement de la corde et la dentale géminée, l'arrêt. Et notre auteur de faire remarquer que bien des faits analogues peuvent échapper à l'observateur, soit par inadvertance, soit parce qu'ils sont masqués par l'évolution de la langue. Quoiqu'il en soit la justesse de ses interprétations nous importe moins ici que leur témoignage sur un aspect de la méthode des lexicographes et grammairiens arabes au moins partiellement conforme au génie de la langue et à la conscience des sujets parlants.

Or, dans la composition des racines arabes classiques, il est deux consonnes ayant fait partie du système consonantique sémitique, le *ḥā'* (spirante pharyngale sourde) et le *mīm* (occlusive nasale bilabiale sonore) qui, diamétralement opposées phonétiquement (degré d'aperture, point et mode d'articulation), le sont aussi sur le plan phonologique. En effet, tandis qu'on relève la fréquence du *mīm*, surtout en finale, dans les racines exprimant les notions de : « fermer », « réunir », « englober »,

(1) A. Meillet, *Encyclopédie française*, I, 1, 32-6-7.
(2) *Ḫaṣā'iṣ*, I, 544-560 ; *Muzhir*, I, 47-55.

« entraver » (1), le *ḥā'*, lui aussi plus particulièrement en fin de mot, figure dans la plupart de celles qui signifient : « ouvrir », « séparer », « disperser », « libérer » (2). Mieux encore, le *mīm* se rencontre dans des racines marquant l'inertie et la tranquillité, la matérialité et la chair, la désolation et la mort,

(1) Liste partielle établie essentiellement d'après le Coran et le *Lisān al-'Arab*, des principales racines renfermant un *mīm ;* les plus remarquables sont mises entre crochets.

1° Notion de « fermer », « serrer », « tenir », « rassembler », « finir » :
'-ṭ-m ; '-d-m ; '-r-m ; '-z-m ; ['-m-m] ; '-n-m ; b-r-m ; ṭ-'-m ; [ṭ-m-m] ; ṯ-ṭ-m ; ǧ-ṯ-m ; ǧ-m-y ; [ǧ-m-'] ; ǧ-l-m ; [ǧ-m-l] ; [ǧ-m-m] ; ǧ-m-h-r ; ḥ-ṭ-m ; ḥ-ǧ-m ; ḥ-z-m ; ḥ-š-m ; ḥ-m-m ; [ḥ-k-m] ; ḥ-m-m ; ḥ-w-m ; [ḥ-ṭ-m] ; ḥ-d-m ; ḥ-m-m ; d-s-m ; [d-'-m] ; d-ǧ-m ; r-ǧ-m ; [r-d-m] ; r-z-m ; r-ḍ-m ; r-ṭ-m ; r-q-m ; r-k-m ; r-m-ṣ ; r-m-m ; z-ḥ-m ; z-m-m ; s-d-m ; s-ṭ-m ; š-'-m ; š-m-ǧ ; š-m-ḍ ; š-m-r ; š-m-ṭ ; š-m-ẓ ; [š-m-l] ; ṣ-ṭ-m ; [ṣ-r-m] ; [ṣ-m-d] ; ṣ-m-m ; ḍ-m-d ; [ḍ-m-m] ; ṭ-ḥ-m ; ṭ-r-m ; ṭ-m-m ; '-ṯ-m ; '-r-m ; ['-z-m] ; '-q-m ; ['-m-m] ; ǧ-ṯ-m ; ǧ-ḍ-m ; [ǧ-n-m] ; f-y-m ; q-ṯ-m ; q-ḍ-m ; q-m-ṭ ; q-m-m ; [k-ṭ-m] ; k-ẓ-m ; [k-m-l] ; [l-'-m] ; l-d-m ; [l-m-m] ; m-ṣ-d ; m-ṣ-r ; m-ṣ-ṣ ; [m-l-k] ; [m-l-l] ; [m-w-l] ; [n-ẓ-m] ; h-l-m ; w-z-m ; w-l-m.

2° Notion de « couvrir », « cacher », « taire » :
'-ḍ-m ; '-ṭ-m ; b-ǧ-m ; [b-k-m] ; [b-h-m] ; ṯ-d-m ; [z-m-l] ; s-m-ṭ ; [š-m-l] ; [ṣ-m-ṭ] ; [ṣ-m-m] ; [ḍ-m-r] ; ['-ǧ-m] ; ǧ-q-m ; ǧ-m-ṭ ; [ǧ-m-d] ; ǧ-m-r ; ǧ-m-s ; ǧ-m-l ; ǧ-m-w ; [ǧ-m-m] ; [ǧ-y-m] ; f-'-m ; f-d-m ; [k-ṭ-m] ; [k-m-n] ; k-m-y ; [l-ṯ-m] ; l-f-m ; w-ǧ-m.

3° Notion de « mordre », « dévorer », « avaler », « assimiler par l'esprit » :
b-z-m ; [ṯ-l-m] ; ǧ-ḍ-m] ; [ǧ-r-m] ; [ǧ-z-m] ; ǧ-'-m ; ǧ-l-m ; ḥ-ḍ-m ; [ḥ-s-m] ; ḥ-ṭ-m ; ḥ-r-m ; ḥ-z-m ; ḥ-ḍ-m ; [r-m-m] ; z-'-m ; z-q-m ; š-ǧ-m ; [š-k-m] ; [š-h-m] ; [ṣ-r-m] ; ḍ-r-m ; ḍ-ǧ-m ; [ṭ-'-m] ; [ṭ-m-'] ; '-ḍ-m ; '-s-m ; '-š-m ; ['-l-m] ; f-ǧ-m ; [f-h-m] ; [f-m-m] ; q-r-m ; [q-s-m] ; q-ṣ-m ; q-ḍ-m ; q-ṭ-m ; [q-l-m] ; k-d-m ; [l-q-m] ; l-h-m ; n-h-m.

4° Notion de « brider », « museler », « entraver », « obliger » :
'-ḍ-m ; b-ḍ-m ; [b-h-m] ; [ṭ-y-m] ; ṯ-k-m ; ǧ-'-m ; [ḥ-ǧ-m] ; [ḥ-r-m] ; [ḥ-z-m] ; [ḥ-k-m] ; [ḥ-l-m] ; [ḥ-d-m] ; ḥ-ṭ-m ; [d-ǧ-m] ; r-'-m ; [r-ǧ-m] ; [r-m-m] ; [z-m-m] ; š-b-m ; š-ǧ-m ; [š-k-m] ; [ṣ-w-m] ; ['-ṣ-m] ; '-k-m ; [ǧ-m-m] ; f-d-m ; [f-ṭ-m] ; [q-h-m] ; k-z-m ; k-ẓ-m ; k-'-m ; [k-m-m] ; [l-ṯ-m] ; [l-ǧ-m] ; l-ḍ-m ; [l-z-m] ; l-s-m ; [m-n-'].

(2) Liste analogue à la précédente mais consacrée aux racines renfermant un *ḥā'*. Comme elles sont moins nombreuses on n'a pas jugé utile de les classer sous des rubriques correspondant aux divers sens retenus : « ouvrir », « creuser », « égorger », « se disperser », « s'isoler », « s'exhaler », « s'étendre », « s'éloigner », « pardonner », « permettre », « libérer ».
['-ḥ-d] ; [b-ḥ-r] ; b-d-ḥ ; b-ḍ-ḥ ; [b-ṭ-ḥ] ; b-n-h ; [b-w-ḥ] ; [ǧ-r-ḥ] ; [ǧ-m-ḥ] ; [ǧ-n-ḥ] ; ǧ-w-ḥ ; ḥ-'-b ; [ḥ-d-d] ; ḥ-ḍ-ḍ ; [ḥ-ḍ-q] ; [ḥ-r-ṯ] ; ḥ-r-d ; [ḥ-r-r] ; ḥ-z-z ; ḥ-ṭ-r ; [ḥ-f-r] [ḥ-l-l] ; d-ḥ-w ; [ḍ-b-ḥ] ; ḍ-ḥ-ḥ ; [r-ḥ-b] ; r-ḥ-ḥ ; r-d-ḥ ; r-š-ḥ ; r-k-ḥ ; z-y-ḥ ; s-ǧ-ḥ ; s-ḥ-ḥ ; s-ḥ-ṭ ; s-ḥ-f ; s-ḥ-w ; s-d-ḥ ; [s-r-ḥ] ; [s-ṭ-ḥ] ; [s-f-ḥ] ; [s-m-ḥ] ; [s-n-ḥ] ; [s-w-ḥ] ; [s-y-ḥ] ; [š-b-ḥ] ; š-ḥ-b ; š-ḥ-r ; š-ḥ-ṣ ; š-ḥ-ṭ ; š-ḥ-w ; [š-r-ḥ] ; š-d-ḥ ; š-q-ḥ ; š-l-ḥ ; ṣ-ḥ-r ; [ṣ-ḥ-f] ; [ṣ-ḥ-n] ; [ṣ-f-ḥ] ; ṣ-w-ḥ ; ṣ-y-ḥ ; [ḍ-r-ǧ] ; [ḍ-r-ḥ] ; ṭ-ḥ-ḥ ; ṭ-ḥ-y ; [ṭ-r-ḥ] ; ṭ-m-ḥ ; ṭ-w-ḥ ; [f-ṭ-ḥ] ; [f-ṣ-ḥ] ; f-ṭ-ḥ ; f-q-ḥ ; [f-l-ḥ] ; [f-w-ḥ] ; [f-y-ḥ] ; q-ḥ-ḥ ; [q-r-ḥ] ; q-w-ḥ ; k-ṭ-ḥ ; k-ḥ-ḥ ; [l-ḥ-d] ; l-q-ḥ ; m-ḥ-ḥ ; m-ṣ-ḥ ; [n-h-ṭ] ; [n-ḥ-r] ; n-d-ḥ ; n-z-ḥ ; n-s-ḥ ; n-ḍ-ḥ ; [n-f-ḥ] ; [n-k-ḥ] ; [w-ḥ-d] ; [w-ḥ-š].

l'obscurité et le mal (1), tandis que dans maintes autres, le *ḥā'* semble exalter le dynamisme et l'inquiétude, la spiritualité et le souffle, la joie et la vie, la lumière et le bien (2).

Ne dirait-on pas que le *ḥā'* ressortit du mode majeur, du principe mâle chargé de forces expansives et le *mīm* du mode mineur, du principe femelle doué de virtualités constrictives ? Opposition étrangement rendue par l'écriture qui note le premier phonème, d'aperture maxima, par un signe ouvert (ح) et le second, par une boucle (م) symbolisant la fermeture des lèvres nécessaire à son émission. Il est d'autres exemples de cette

(1) [*'-ṯ-m*] ; [*'-l-m*] ; [*'-m-n*] ; *b-r-m* ; *b-š-m* ; *ǧ-ṯ-m* ; [*ǧ-r-m*] ; [*ǧ-s-m*] ; *ǧ-š-m* ; [*ǧ-m-d*] ; *ǧ-m-s* ; *ǧ-h-m* ; *ḫ-m-m* ; [*ḫ-m-d*] ; *ḫ-m-r* ; *ḫ-m-l* ; *ḫ-m-w* ; [*ḫ-y-m*] ; *d-ǧ-m* ; *d-s-m* ; *d-ǧ-m* ; *d-l-m* ; *d-m-s* ; *d-ǧ-m* ; *d-s-m* ; *d-ǧ-m* ; *d-l-m* ; *d-m-s* ; [*d-m-'*] ; [*d-m-y*] ; [*d-ḫ-m*] ; [*d-w-m*] ; *ḏ-'-m* ; [*ḏ-m-m*] ; *r-ḫ-m* ; *r-ḏ-m* ; [*r-m-d*] ; *r-m-s* ; *r-m-k* ; [*r-m-m*] ; *z-h-m* ; [*s-'-m*] ; *s-ǧ-m* ; *s-ḫ-m-* ; *s-ḫ-m* ; *s-d-m* ; [*ṣ-q-m*] ; [*s-m-m*] ; *s-m-l* ; [*s-m-n*] ; *s-n-m* ; *s-w-m* ; [*š-'m*] ; [*š-t-m*] ; *š-ǧ-m* ; [*š-ḫ-m*] ; [*š-m-t*] ; *ṣ-ḫ-m* ; [*ṣ-m-d*] ; [*ḍ-ḫ-m*] ; [*ḍ-m-n*] ; *ḍ-m-y* ; [*ḍ-y-m*] ; *ṭ-s-m* ; [*ṭ-'-m*] ; *ṭ-m-s* ; [*ṭ-m-m*] ; [*ẓ-l-m*] ; *'-b-m* ; *'-t-m* ; [*'-d-m*] ; [*'-ẓ-m*] ; [*'-q-m*] ; [*'-m-r*] ; [*'-m-y*] ; *ġ-s-m* ; *ġ-š-m* ; *ġ-m-ḏ* ; [*ġ-m-m*] ; *ġ-h-m* ; [*ġ-y-m*] ; [*f-ḫ-m*] ; *f-q-m* ; *q-ṭ-m* ; *q-ḫ-m* ; *k-w-m* ; [*l-ḫ-m*] ; [*l-w-m*] ; [*m-d-d*] ; *m-d-r* ; [*m-d-n*] ; [*m-r-r*] ; [*m-s-w*] ; [*m-k-ṯ*] ; [*m-l-l*] ; [*m-w-t*] ; [*n-d-m*] ; [*n-w-m*] ; [*h-ǧ-m*] ; [*h-d-m*] ; [*h-r-m*] ; [*h-z-m*] ; *h-ḏ-m* ; [*h-m-m*].

(2) *b-ǧ-ḥ* ; *b-ḥ-t* ; [*b-ḥ-ṯ*] ; *b-ḥ-r* ; *b-d-ḥ* ; *b-ḏ-ḥ* ; [*b-r-ḥ*] ; [*b-w-ḥ*] ; *ǧ-l-ḥ* ; [*ǧ-m-ḥ*] ; [*ḫ-b-b*] ; [*ḫ-b-ǧ*] ; [*ḫ-b-ḏ*] ; [*ḫ-ṯ-ṯ*] ; [*ḫ-ǧ-ǧ*] ; [*ḫ-r-b*] ; [*ḫ-r-z*] ; [*ḫ-r-s*] ; [*ḫ-r-ṣ*] ; [*ḫ-r-k*] ; [*ḫ-s-d*] ; [*ḫ-s-n*] ; [*ḫ-ṣ-n*] ; [*ḫ-ḏ-ḏ*] ; [*ḫ-ẓ-ẓ*] ; *ḫ-ẓ-w* ; [*ḫ-q-d*] ; [*ḫ-q-r*] ; [*ḫ-q-q*] ; [*ḫ-n-q*] ; [*ḫ-y-y*] ; *d-ḫ-ḥ* ; [*r-b-ḫ*] ; [*r-ǧ-ḥ*] ; [*r-ḫ-l*] ; *r-q-ḥ* ; [*r-m-ḥ*] ; [*r-w-ḥ*] ; [*r-y-ḥ*] ; *z-ḫ-ḥ* ; [*z-ḫ-f*] ; *z-n-ḥ* ; [*s-b-ḫ*] ; [*s-ḫ-r*] ; [*s-l-ḫ*] ; [*s-n-ḫ*] ; [*š-b-ḫ*] ; [*š-ḫ-ḫ*] ; [*š-r-ḫ*] ; [*ṣ-b-ḫ*] ; [*ṣ-ḫ-ḫ*] ; [*ṣ-ḫ-w*] ; [*ṣ-r-ḫ*] ; [*ṣ-l-ḫ*] ; [*s-y-ḫ*] ; *ḍ-b-ḫ* ; *ḍ-ḫ-ḫ* ; [*ḍ-ḫ-k*] ; [*ḍ-ḫ-y*] ; *ḍ-y-ḫ* ; [*ṭ-f-ḫ*] ; [*ṭ-m-ḫ*] ; *f-ḫ-ṯ* ; [*f-ḫ-ṣ*] ; [*f-r-ḫ*] ; [*f-ṣ-ḫ*] ; [*f-ḍ-ḫ*] ; [*q-d-ḫ*] ; [*l-m-ḫ*] ; [*l-w-ḫ*] ; *m-ǧ-ḥ* ; [*m-d-ḫ*] ; [*m-r-ḫ*] ; [*m-z-ḫ*] ; *m-ḍ-ḥ* ; [*m-l-ḫ*] ; [*n-b-ḫ*] ; [*n.ǧ.ḫ*] ; [*n-ṣ-ḫ*] ; [*n-ḍ-ḫ*] ; *w-ḫ-ǧ* ; [*w-ḫ-y*] ; [*w-ḍ-ḫ*] ; [*y-w-ḫ*].

Enfin il y a lieu d'évoquer le *Cratyle* de Platon (*Œuvres complètes*, éd. de la Pléiade 1944, I, 613-691) : « le *r*, tout d'abord, est à mes yeux une sorte d'outil pour toute espèce de mouvement. » (p. 670) ; « la lettre *r* a été jugée par celui qui a établi les noms, comme un bon outil du mouvement, en vue de réaliser en eux une ressemblance avec la translation ; tout au moins en use-t-il maintes fois en visant celle-ci... C'est qu'il a vu, je crois, que cette lettre est celle sur laquelle la langue se tient le moins immobile, mais effectue le plus de vibrations ; voilà à mes yeux, la raison pour laquelle il l'a utilisée pour ces noms. Mais d'autre part, c'est l'*i* pour tout ce qui est léger, et dès lors, apte au plus haut point à passer partout... » (p. 670-671) ; « ...à ton avis, faisons-nous bien de dire que le *r* a de la ressemblance avec la translation, le mouvement, la dureté ?... Et que le *l* en a avec le lisse, le mou et tout ce que nous disions tout à l'heure ? » (p. 681) ; « N'avons-nous pas maintes fois convenu que ceux des noms qui sont bien faits ont ressemblance avec ces choses-là dont ils sont les noms et qu'ils sont des images des choses ? » (p. 688). — V. aussi le remarquable article de Jean Lecerf, *La transcendance du langage de l'Antiquité à nos jours en passant par le Monde arabe médiéval*, *Studia Islamica*, XII, 1960, 5-27.

concordance entre la graphie et le phonétisme arabes : addition d'un point à l'occlusive pour la spirante interdentale correspondante t/ṯ (ث-ت), d/ḏ (ذ-د), de trois sur le *šīn* (ش), chuintante du *sīn* (س) — bien que n'en dérivant pas à l'origine, emploi pour les emphatiques ṣ ḍ ṭ ẓ (ظ ط ض ص) de signes en forme de poire schématisant quelque peu la cage de résonance buccale pendant leur phonation.

Cette opposition phonologique est d'autant plus probante qu'elle se révèle dans des racines et des mots à fort coefficient d'usage, notamment dans des couples de termes hautement significatifs. On remarquera que c'est en finale que le *ḫā'* et le *mīm* sont plus « pertinents », surtout quand ils sont géminés. L'expressivité particulière des finales n'est peut-être pas étrangère au classement adéquat adopté par les premiers lexicographes arabes imbus, par ailleurs, de la primauté, généralement admise, de la poésie (monorime, ne l'oublions pas) sur la prose. Quoiqu'il en soit c'est surtout l'examen des racines comportant à la fois nos deux lettres qui est révélateur. En tout cela il faut évidemment se garder de systématiser et de généraliser à outrance, mais ne contribueraient-elles qu'à aider à mettre un peu d'ordre dans le fatras de la sémantique arabe, que nos remarques mériteraient quelque attention.

Les racines du type $H \times M$ sont remarquables en ce sens que beaucoup d'entre elles expriment essentiellement un mouvement-impulsion se résolvant en arrêt-conclusion. Voici par exemple : *ḥ-s-m* — (à rapprocher de *ḥ-m-s*, être brave) — : couper, cautériser, empêcher ; *ḥ-t-m* : parachever, rendre obligatoire, juger ; *ḥ-k-m* : arbitrer, gouverner, juger, retenir ; *ḥukm* : pouvoir, autorité, règle, etc. ; *ḥakam* : arbitre ; *ḥikma* : sagesse ; *ḥ-ǧ-m* : sucer, mettre des ventouses, serrer, empêcher ; *ḥ-z-m* — (à rapprocher de *'-z-m* : être décidé, agir) — : sangler, avoir un jugement ferme, être résolu ; *ḥ-l-m* : être maître de soi, doué de *ḥilm*, être *ḥalīm* (patient à toute épreuve) ; *ḥ-r-m* : être sacré, interdit, prohibé ; *ḥaram* : territoire sacré de La Mecque ; *ḥarām* : sacré, défendu, illicite — ayant pour antonyme *ḥalāl* : permis, licite, les deux qualifications juridiques fondamentales des actes humains (1).

(1) Sur la classification des Arabes préislamiques en Ḥums (habitants du Ḥaram,

Aux deux racines *'-m-n* et *s-l-m* se rattachent des termes « musulmans » par excellence où le *mīm* paraît traduire l'apaisement : *āmīn* : amen ; *īmān* : foi ; *mu'min* : croyant ; *salām* : salut, paix ; *islām* : l'Islām ; *muslim* : musulman.

Dans d'autres tels que *umma* : communauté, peuple, nation — (à rapprocher de *milla* : religion, nation, et de *mala'* : foule) ; *imām* : celui qui préside la prière canonique ; *ǧāmi'* : mosquée-cathédrale ; *ǧamā'a* : communauté des croyants ; *iǧmā'* : concensus des docteurs..., le *mīm* symbolise la notion de communauté musulmane, riche de chaleur humaine, seul refuge de l'individu solitaire sujet à la terreur panique (le *waḥš*) en face de l'Unique *(wāḥid, aḥad)* et forme supérieure de l'instinct grégaire.

Enfin dans le message coranique la résonance du groupe ḥ-m est primordiale dans les deux racines *ḥ-m-d* : louer, glorifier ; *ḥamd* : louange ; *Aḥmad* et surtout *Muḥammad* (le loué) le nom du Prophète — et *r-ḥ-m* : être compatissant ; *riḥm* : utérus ; *raḥma* : miséricorde ; et surtout *Raḥmān Raḥīm*, le Bienfaiteur miséricordieux, c'est-à-dire *Allāh.*

A l'élan des croyants vers le Créateur répond la compassion divine, à l'inquiétude qui les torture, leur foi dans le salut éternel.

D'autre part, on sait qu'un certain nombre de sourates sont précédées de sigles énigmatiques, notamment les sourates XL-XLVI dites « *ḥawāmīm* » parce qu'elles débutent par les deux lettres *ḥā' mīm.* Que leur rangement par ordre de longueur décroissante permette de penser que ces dernières ont constitué un des recueils partiels et individuels antérieurs à l'établissement de la vulgate 'uṯmānienne nous indiffère ici, mais avec R. Blachère (*Introduction au Coran*, 149) on verra dans ces *fawātiḥ* (liminaires) « l'abréviation d'une formule pieuse ou d'un appellatif utilisé comme incipit propitiatoire ». Et le rapprochement paraît s'imposer entre l'incipit des *ḥawāmīm* et le premier verset de la *Fātiḥa* (Liminaire) : *al-ḥamd*^{u} *li-Llāh*^{i}

territoire sacré de Makka dont le temple, la Ka'ba, était appelé al-Ḥamsā') et en Ḥilla, V. M. J. Kister, *Mecca and Tamīm, J. E. S. H. O.*, VIII/Part II/Nov. 1965, 132-144.

Rabbi l-'ālamīn où les deux principaux accents d'intensité portent sur le *ḥā'* initial et le *mīm* final. N'est-il pas permis de penser à une sorte de formule gnostique évoquant subconsciemment le drame religieux (appel, angoisse métaphysique, unicité) par le *ḥā'*, et par le *mīm*, son dénouement (réponse, paix par et dans l'Islām, grégarité salvatrice) (1) ?

L'opposition phonologique du *ḥā'* et du *mīm* si caractéristique du génie de la langue arabe pourrait faciliter l'appréhension de la « tension » islamique fondamentale.

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(1) Dans la belle communication faite par le R. P. G. Anawati au IIIe Congrès des études arabes et islamiques (Ravello, 1-6 sept. 1966), je remarque que parmi les plus importantes interprétations proposées du nom suprême de Dieu *(al-ism al-a'ẓam)* figure celle d'« *al-ḥayy al-qayyūm* » commençant par un *ḥā'* et terminée par un *mīm*. Par contre le « *huwa* » du *ḏikr* procède du *hā' (Allāh > lah > h)*, sans conteste le phonème consonantique arabe le plus faible et le moins expressif.

THE STRUCTURE OF CREATED CAUSALITY ACCORDING TO AL-AŠ'ARÎ

An Analysis of the *Kitâb al-Luma'*, §§ 82-164

The attention of many scholars has been turned to the study of the general problem of God's predetermination of events and man's freedom of action and causation as it was treated by the various authors of the early kalâm, sometimes with considerable penetration and insight and often without going beyond the mere collection and collation of formulae. W. M. Watt, in particular, has made a number of significant contributions to the elucidation of this problem and its history in his *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam*. Generally speaking however, the whole problem remains somewhat obscure, both in regard to the position of individual authors and in the general outline of its development through the diverse schools of kalâm in the first four centuries of Islam.

Central to the history of this question in muslim thought is al-Aš'arî's understanding of human causality. Though his system may not have been altogether new and unique, his formulation and organisation of the detail was so and the triumph of his theology marks a pivotal moment in the history of islamic religious speculation. His conception of the ontological structure of the human act however, and the theory of *kasb* has been a rather thorny problem for western scholarship and one about which there seems yet to be no real concensus. A number of writers have taken the position that al-Aš'arî allows for no really human, moral act. For example, Fr. Richard McCarthy, to whom we are indebted for an excellent edition and

translation of the *Kitâb al-Luma'*, flatly denies that the author admitted any secondary causation, saying (1) that "for al-Ash'arî there was no such thing" and that the author's " 'acquired' motion seems to be quite as ineluctable and inevitable as his 'necessary' motion." (2) Even upon a cursory examination of the pertinent evidence, however, it is clear that both al-Aš'arî and the main body of even the most conservative of Islamic thinkers intended at least to allow for some kind of really human causality and true moral responsibility in man's performance of his acts, however clumsy their formulation of and proposed solutions to the question may appear to the contemporary reader, steeped as he is in the habits and traditions of classical and western thought. The universal condemnation by orthodox Islam of the so-called *muǧabbira*, those who truly meant to deny all proper human and secondary causality is well known (though again, even here, one should beware of reading their apparently absolute denial of secondary causality in too simplistic a fashion, because most of them were neither simpletons nor prepared to deny all the evidences of experience). One need only note the violent support of man's genuine responsibility for the realisation of his own acts and the bitter comments about the doctrine of the *muǧabbira* by the ultra-conservative Ibn Taymîya in his *Iḫtiǧâǧ bil-Qadar* (3). Again, the *'aqîda* which is attributed to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal or which purports, rather, to give an account of his teaching and which without doubt reflects common ḥanbalite doctrine, clearly sets him in opposition to the absolute determinism of the *muǧabbira*, setting forth its teaching in a form which is basically aš'arite (4) ;

(1) *The Theology of al-Ash'ari* (Beyrouth, 1953), 58, n. 15 (*ad* § 91 of the translation).

(2) *Ibid.*, 59, n. 16.

(3) *Maǧmû'at ar-Rasâ'il al-kubrâ* (Cairo, 1323) 2, 80 ff.

(4) Cf. Ibn abî Ya'lâ, *Ṭabaqât al-ḥanâbila* (ed. M. H. al-Faqî, Cairo, 1371/1952) 2, 291 ff, esp. pp. 299f, where there is cited an ḥadîth attributed to 'Alî expressing the aš'arite formula that human action proceeds "from men as act and from God as created." In its present form this *'aqîda* would not seem to belong to Ibn Ḥanbal; the general usage is not in conformity with his *Radd 'alâ l-ǧahmîya* and, though not so in every detail, some good part of what is said would seem to show some dependence upon al-Aš'arî. The *isnâd* goes back to 'Abd al-Wâḥid b. 'Abd al-

and the same is true of the preface to the *'aqîda*, written by the ḥanbalî, Rizq Allâh ibn 'Abd al-Wahhâb ibn 'Abd al-'Azîz (d. 488/1095) (1). According to both tracts, man is the true moral agent of his own acts.

Al-Aš'arî may not have been altogether successful in maintaining the truly moral character of the human act. He is polemically accused of being a determinist in the writings of his opponents, both the Mu'tazila and Ibn Taymîya, but these accusations however subtly argued must be read as polemical. W. M. Watt pointed out some time ago that the notion of *kasb* or *iktisâb* is meant to designate "man's share in human acts" (2) and one should be very cautious of taking al-Aš'arî's formulation of the problem as a mere piece of casuistry, his understanding of *kasb* as *merely* "God's juridical attribution" of the human act to the apparent agent or as man's simply "taking on" the responsibility for his acts. No doubt one central factor in the popularity of al-Aš'arî's theology is that the principal formulae in which he expressed his teaching are couched in the vocabulary of the *Koran* and read often like the sententiae of the most radical traditionalists. Nevertheless, one can only assume, from the outset of the inquiry, that his proposed solution to the problem of human causality was indeed intellectually satisfying to all that great body of Muslim theologians who did in fact take it up and that it could not have been so accepted had it not made some coherent theological and philosophical sense.

The insistence that God is, in the final analysis, the sole creator and true cause of all that is, all other causality being completely and absolutely dependent upon it, is common to a far broader area of Islamic speculation than the orthodox kalâm. Al-Kindî, for example, states quite bluntly in his *Risâla fî l-fâ'il al-ḥaqq al-awwal al-tâmm* that all causes other

'Azîz (d. 410/1020) and it may well be that the greater part of the formulae contained in the work date no earlier than the time of al-Aš'arî.

(1) Cf. *ibid.*, 265ff, esp. p. 269; this again is quite aš'arite in its general appearance and though it may perhaps be not altogether so it betrays some influence of the 'aš'arite solution to the problem.

(2) *JRAS* 1943, p. 237 ; cf. also his *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Edinburgh, 1962), 87.

than God "are called agents only metaphorically" (1), and this doctrine receives its classic formulation in the work of Avicenna, for whose entire system it is fundamental. He says, for example, in the *Kitâb al-Išârât wat-Tanbîhât* (2) that "every being other than [God] belongs to Him as His possession" and in the *Kitâb an-Naǧât* quite unequivocally sets forth the absolute determination of every aspect of every being as it proceeds ultimately from God, including all acts of the will on the part of man (3). As with Avicenna, in the case of al-Aš'arî, the fundamental assumptions from which he derives his understanding of the detail of the problem may be quite simple (as are most elemental insights) but his conception of the whole is not thereby simplistic. The question with al-'Aš'arî, as with any other great author, is how he understood the implications of the formulae.

What I propose therefore to do in this study is no more than this: to examine the terms and structure of the problem according to which al-Aš'arî came to and formulated his understanding of the question of human causality and to set out the basic philosophical structure of his solution of it.

There can be little doubt as Watt has shown (4), that there is already a long history to the terms which al-'Aš'arî uses and the basic form of his doctrine. The exact relationship of his thought, however, to that of his predecessors, particularly Ḍirâr b. 'Amr and an-Naǧǧâr must wait for any adequate treatment until their teaching has been fully examined in detail and for this reason I shall here restrict myself quite closely to the position of al-Aš'arî himself as it is presented in the *Kitâb al-Luma'*. Though keeping the discussion as general as precision will allow in order to avoid having to take up individually the diverse theories of al-Aš'arî's contemporaries and predecessors,

(1) *Rasâ'il al-Kindî*, ed. M. abû Rîda, I (Cairo, 1369/1950), 183; cf. also *ibid.*, 162. The same sort of thing is found in the *Theology of Aristotle*, expressed always in the passages which have no correspondent in the *Enneades* and which may, perhaps, be of Muslim origin.

(2) Ed. J. Forget (Leiden, 1892), 159.

(3) *K. an-Naǧât*² (Cairo, 1357/1938), 302.

(4) *Op. cit.*

I should like first to outline briefly the general structure of the problem within whose specific context the precise meaning and significance of al-Aš'arî's achievement must be seen. Once the basic outline of the problem and system is made, the organisation of the sections of the *K. al-Luma'* in which the questions relating to *qudra* and *istiṭâ'a* are treated becomes quite clear and, surprisingly perhaps, the work shows itself to be not only very precise in the order of its exposition, but also very tight and almost scholastically consistent in its argumentation.

One of the chief sources of difficulty in interpreting the *Luma'* is unquestionably that of its style, which is almost algebraic in its conciseness and abstractness. This quality seems to have made it subject to misunderstandings quite early in its history, since al-Ğuwaynî, whose style of exposition and argumentation is frequently not altogether free of its own obscurities, is put to some effort to expand and explain its meaning in several passages (1). The work is a kind of *summa* of several central theological questions and, like any compendium, sets forth both questions and arguments in the briefest possible form. In all cases the question under discussion is very precisely defined; that is, it is assumed that the very strict limitation of the problem is known to the reader as well as the exact definition of the terms in question, as they are used. All matters which are in any way considered by the author as extraneous or marginal to the immediate discussion of his central theme are omitted entirely. As this is coupled with the greatest brevity of exposition, the whole effect then is one of an abstractness and precision which is truly remarkable. Because of this quality however, it is of the utmost importance that the reader keep the exact meaning of the terms always precisely in mind as well as the exact delimitation of the point in question (2).

(1) Cf., for example, *Kitâb aš-šâmil*, pt. 1, ed. H. Klopfer (Cairo, 1959) 131ff and 154ff.

(2) In a number of instances where Fr. McCarthy, the editor, remarks in his notes that the argument seems weak or inconsistent the real problem is that he has fallen afoul of the abstractness of the text. For example, where he suggests that the author is "begging the question" (p. 78, n. 5, *ad* § 126) he has simply failed

The basic terms and the general structure of the problem of the nature of the human act were already well defined in the kalâm tradition by the time of al-Aš'arî; quite briefly it was that of the nature of man's power to realise his own acts and the relation of this "power" to the universal causality of God as the ground of all Being. The central concept to be defined and explained was that of *qudra*, the power of efficient causality (used both of God's power and of man's) and though the term was used in a number of quite different basic meanings as a technical term by several authors, both before and after al-Aš'arî, its general content, as defining the question, was commonly recognised in a quite precise manner. The question of *qudra* and *qadar* does not however, as conceived and formulated by the mutakallimîn, coincide exactly with any single term or any one question which had been the subject of extensive treatment and elaboration in its own right as an isolated locus of speculative debate in either Greek philosophy or Christan theology before Islam. While it becomes ever more apparent that the kalâm is closely related in its origins to the whole classical and Christian tradition of philosophy and theology, nevertheless its uniqueness of perspective and the originality of its contribution to this tradition become also more evident.

Though perhaps the point may seem only too obvious in some respects, it should be noted at the outset that though meaning fundamentally the "power [to act]", the term *qudra* (or *istiṭâ'a*) in its proper and native meaning is in every respect opposed to the normal meaning and the content of Greek δύναμις, as it is usually used in Greek philosophy. Basically, in its Aristotelian use, the term δύναμις, whither δύναμις τοῦ ποιεῖν or δύναμις τοῦ πάσχειν designates the potentiality to become other (1). Whereas δύναμις has thus "no sense save in the interior of a being in movement and has none at all in God" as P. Aubenque remarks (2), the Arabic term *qudra* in a Muslim context (like, indeed, the expressions and terms for God's power

to grasp the fact that it is by definition of the term *qudra* as al-'Aš'arî uses it, that the objection is invalidated and cannot stand; there is no argument thus.

(1) P. Aubenque, *Le Problème de l'être chez Aristote* (Paris, 1962), 440.

(2) *Ibid.*, n. 1.

in Christian thought) is not only exclusively active (1), but is understood as primarily and most properly applicable to God, who, in the words of the *Koran*, "holds power over all things". Most importantly, this active quality of *qudra*, which we shall discuss below, is not strictly taken in the kalâm as a power or potentiality to become other but as an "accident" *('araḍ)* or attribute, and so designates the actuality of a state of being in the subject, viz., the actuality of being able to effect the realisation of some act. This remains true even with the diversity of particular significations which it takes on with various authors. For some, Ghaylân, Bišr b. al-Mu'tamir, for example (2), and even for Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (3), it was taken as the physical strength and well-being of the body as forming the potential for acting, while for the majority of the Mu'tazila, it was understood rather as a distinct "accident" which forms the state of being a potential agent. In the latter sense it does, in effect, refer to the future and a kind of possibility of becoming; but nevertheless, most strictly understood and in its primary sense, it represents the actuality of a state of being. In short, the *qudra* of the mutakallimîn is a fulfilled actuality not an imperfection relative to a perfection in a state of becoming (4). Again, parallel and consistent with this basic understanding, the state of actuality of being for the kalâm is, in general, a finite and discrete moment of being, not, as it is for Aristotle, an actuality or reality achieved out of a becoming (5); it is rather the present

(1) Even the usual construction of the verb *qadara* with *'alà* is incompatible with the common uses of δύναμις ; note also that while the term *quwwa* (which is used in the *Luma'* several times as the equivalent of *qudra*) in the expression *bil-quwwa* is used as the equivalent of δυνάμει, this is purely a translation usage and the proper Arabic term for potentiality in the Greek sense is *imkân* (according to whose grammatical use, that for which the possibility or potentiality exists is grammatically the object!).

(2) Al-Aš'arî, *Maqâlât al-Islâmîyîn* (ed. H. Ritter, Istanbul, 1929-30), 229.

(3) Cf. *'aqîda, loc. cit.*

(4) From the standpoint of the ontology of the "accidents" as such, this is true even when—as is the case according to most of the Mu'tazila—the individual act of *qudra* is always relative to an act to be performed, to whose realisation the actuality of the *qudra* is prior.

(5) Cf. Aubenque, *op. cit.*, 441.

state of being, perfect and complete in the fulness of its being, discrete and without inherent reference to any past state.

The question of becoming in terms of the inherent principles of things to become other is not a problem which was of central concern to most of the kalâm. Insofar as it treated of material beings, the chief orientation of the kalâm was to the investigation of the ontological or metaphysical structure of the being of material creatures in the createdness of their Being, not τὰ φυσικά, i.e., not the ultimate structure of material beings considered in their materiality as the constitute the world and the principles of its order as world. If one excludes an-Naẓẓâm and Mu'ammar, who are quite tangential to the main-stream of kalâm thought, things, for the earlier kalâm—material beings—can hardly be said to contain within themselves any principle of becoming. No being, in and of itself, by virtue of the inherent principles of its being, is oriented towards a becoming-other than it is; for most of the early mutakallimîn, all things are no more than they are and their being is complete and fulfilled at any given moment of their existence. No being has in itself any intrinsic "potentiality" to change or alteration except the knowing, willing, and intending agent; its becoming other is entirely dependent upon and resides in the potentiality of an exterior agent who is capable of effecting the change. The production of being thus is not traced chiefly, as with Aristotle and the Greeks, to principles inherent in the thing, as to the "matter" and the "form" which it contains *in potentia*, but rather rests in the agent, since material being, as such, is no more than it is in the created fulness of its actuality. In the concrete order of the world, matter is completely determined by the "accidents" *(a'râḍ)* which together constitute the content of the present reality of the particular being. Whatever alteration it may undergo, whatever "change of form" it may suffer, exists, in its potentiality, entirely and exclusively in the intention of the agent who is capable of producing the change through his own power of causality. The whole problem thus becomes shifted to one of efficient causality; the significant "causes" of being become almost exclusively the "moving" cause, as the intending agent, and the "final" cause, as his intention in his knowing

what he intends, the nexus of action and change residing in his power of efficient causality *(qudra)*. In this way, all Being, save God, is absolutely finite in that ontologically it is realised exhaustively in the actuality of its present, as created by God, having intrinsically and by virtue of itself, no potentiality to become other.

Avicenna, in his *Kitâb al-Išârât* attacks precisely this notion that potentiality consists entirely in being *maqdûr 'alayhi* (i.e., subject to the efficient causality of an agent), in that it does not allow in any way for the real potentiality of the existent prior to the actuality of its presence in the world, insisting on the actuality *(ḥuṣûl)* of its potentiality in itself, in the potentiality of the substrate (1). However, it is precisely this non-existence of any true potentiality outside the agent which al-Aš'arî, for example, wished to insist upon. Al-Ğuwaynî notes that, in the *Luma'*, his proof of the existence of God on the basis of the argument of the growth and development of the "drop of sperm" *(nuṭfa)*, is

(1) *Išârât*, 151 *(išâra)*; concerning the priority of matter, cf. *Naǧât*, 219 and also Ṭûsî's comment on *Išârât, loc. cit.* (ed. S. Dunya [Cairo, 1958]), 507ff. Avicenna's position on this whole question is not entirely unlike that of the kalâm however, if one consider in his thought the absolute determination of the *muraǧǧiḥ* (that which determines the actualisation of the cause) in the production of being and the total indifference of orientation towards being and non-being of the potential as such, apart from the determination of the *muraǧǧiḥ*. For the kalâm likewise, the cause of the being of the thing is determined in its causality, with the exception of the ultimate cause; cf. also *infra*, p. 31, n. 1. Despite the several tempting analogies and the quasi semantic equvalence of the terms, I hesitate to agree with van den Bergh when he suggests (*Averroes' Tahafut al-Tahafut* [Oxford, 1954] 2, 38) that the term *maqdûr* is the equivalent of the Stoic "εἱμαρμένον, that which is decreed." From the outset, the term *maqdûr* is common throughout the kalâm and shows no such resonance. It is short for *maqdûr 'alayhi*, i.e., that which is subject to the power [of causality] of an agent who is *qâdir 'alayhi* and even in the earliest authors (e.g., abû l-Hudhayl) the expression *maqdûrât Allâh*, as a technical term designates those things which are subject to the power and causality of God (which, for some of the Mu'tazila includes those things which He will never create) not what He has decreed, even though the two may well prove upon examination of a particular author to be equivalent because of the peculiar relationship which is understood to exist between God's power and knowledge and will (as is the case with abû l-Hudhayl). Van den Bergh's rendering of the sentence of Šahrastânî *(ibid.)* is forced and incorrect, since what it says is that "the *muktasab* is that which is subject to the created act of causality and actually exists according to the created act of causality;" the expression "have been decreed" would have to be *muqaddara* in Arabic, not *maqdûra*.

directed against those who hold the potential existence of things in matter *(aṣḥâb al-hayûlà)*: "those who say that the world exists in matter potentially, the date palm in the date stone, the man in the drop of sperm", etc. (1) For the earlier kalâm, the true cause of the being of any thing is the agent who intends its being and realises it according to a knowing act of the will. In this way, the realisation of all being is dependent not only on the efficient causality *(qudra)* of the agent but is wholly determined (pre-determined) in his knowledge and his intention. In this respect the whole construction is somewhat neoplatonic (2).

Within such a framework as this all change involves, in one sense or another, a kind of creation, since whatever change or Being is effected represents the realisation of new being entirely out of the efficient causality of the agent, in that no proper potentiality of the thing is held to precede its realisation, outside that of the agent's power of causality.

This then is the central core of the problem of *qudra* and man's potentiality to perform his own acts, as it was debated in the earlier kalâm. Though in its origin, no doubt, the question was primarily one of the validity and structure of man's moral responsibility for his own action and tends to remain seated in this context for most of the Mu'tazila, it is not, as it ultimately came to be formulated and refined, essentially a question of "free will". For most kalâm authors, the question of the spontaneity

(1) Al-Ğuwaynî, *op. cit.*, 132; this statement however, against the *aṣḥâb al-hayûlà* (whether made by the 'aš'arites or the Mu'tazila as represented by al-Ğubbâ'î, abû Hâšim and his followers, etc.) is not to be taken as denying natural processes but rather as opposing the notion of Naẓẓâm and others that matter itself, in virtue of the nature of its materiality, contains any inherent "nature" or principle of self-determination, active or passive; cf. 'Abd al-Ğabbâr, *Šarḥ al-uṣûl al-ḫamsa* (ed. A. Ousman, Cairo, 1965), 387f.

(2) This, like almost any global statement about the kalâm, requires some qualification; the relationship between the knowledge and intention of the agent and the structure of his act and the degree of his causation is not identical for all writers and is notably "looser" for the school of al-Ğubbâ'î than for al-Aš'arî and his followers. On the relationship which al-Aš'arî sees between God's knowing all beings and his being the absolute ground of the being of all beings, cf. *infra ad* § 107. It is significant that the earliest muslim system of theology about which we have much information is in fact based on a neoplatonic model, viz., that of Ğahm b. Ṣafwân; cf. R. Frank, "The Neoplatonism of Ğahm b. Ṣafwân," *Le Muséon* 78 (1965), pp. 395ff.

and freedom of the will *(irâda)* is another and distinct question and as such is treated separately. More closely allied in the matter of the determination or non-determination of human acts, but still distinct, is the question of the existential transcendence of human existence; but although this would appear to be a scarcely avoidable concomitant to the problem of human causality (and was, in fact, central to the conception of the problem by abû l-Hudhayl), al-Aš'arî, in refining and delimiting the question, eliminated it, as we shall see, altogether from his discussion of *qudra*. The question of *qudra* is thus chiefly if not exclusively one of the metaphysical structure of efficient causality and, insofar as it treats of man and his causation, the ontology of the created cause (1).

The causality of any agent inevitably involves creation, in one way or another; this is a primary conception for most of the kalâm. The problem then is how one is to explain man as the true cause of his own acts, for which he is responsible before God. That he is the morally responsible agent in the eyes of God is a datum of revelation and as such is beyond debate, so that it is the character and nature of his agency which must be understood and explained. The question thus for al-Aš'arî, as for the rest of the mutakallimîn, is not to grasp the process and structure of the human act as process but rather to understand the metaphysical structure and validity of the human act as truly the act of the human agent within the general context of the universally creative omnipotence of God: what is the nature and structure of human causality if all action on the part of a "knowing, intending, and willing agent" *(fâ'il 'âlim qâṣid murîd)* does in fact involve the production, out of and by means of his own potentiality of causation, of new Being, when creation or the bringing into existence of Being belongs to the Creator (2).

(1) That causality was in a unique sense the central problem of Islamic philosophy and theology was long ago pointed out by J. Obermann in his "Das Problem der Kausalität bei den Arabern," *WZKM* 29 (1915), 323ff and 30 (1916-17), 37ff. The Mu'tazila, because they tended always to keep their argumentation of the question within the context of the problem of God's justice, give the impression of not having achieved the precision and abstractness of thought which one finds in the work of al-Aš'arî and his followers.

(2) I would not belie the real complexity of this question in the history of the

The problem which al-Aš'arî sets about to solve is a formulation of human causality which would leave God as the sole and unique creator of all Being without at the same time vitiating the reality of human causation.

The immediate background against which al-Aš'arî wrote is that formed by the Mu'tazila and most particularly the system of his master, al-Ğubbâ'î and his school, for whom human causality was truly creative. Though allowing that man's potential of causality was indeed created in him by God, al-Ğubbâ'î nevertheless held that man was the agent of his act by way of "creating and producing new being" *(ḫalqan wa-ibdâ-'an)* (1). Fleeing, as it were, anything which might smack of God's determination or domination of the free human act, al-Ğubbâ'î and his fellows tended to let man's efficient causality become rather completely free and independent of God's

development of Muslim thought, for the notion of Being in the kalâm is variously understood in a number of quite subtle significations, which are of real importance for the history of philosophy. The kalâm distinguishes, almost from the very beginning, between the thing *(šay')* and the actuality of its presence in the world *(wuǧûd)*, and from the time of Šaḥḥâm a number of authorities held that the two are really distinct. Within this framework the debate concerning the nature of created causality and the respective rôles of God and man in causation of events in the world becomes very complexly nuanced as various authors set forth their different views of the problem. For some of the Mu'tazila, the human agent is the cause of the thing's Being (in the sense of its presence in the world) wherefore they would allow the application of the term "creation" *(ḫalq, iḥdâṯ)* to man's performance of his act (cf. *infra*). The form of the question during and before the time of al-Aš'arî is difficult to follow in its detail because of the lack of adequate citations of many authors in the available sources. However, since al-Aš'arî, like abû l-Hudhayl and a few others of the Mu'tazila, did not allow the distinction, we need not go into the question here. On the function of al-Aš'arî's position on this question within his understanding of the structure of created causation, cf. *infra ad* § 87.

(1) Šahrastânî, *Kitâb al-Milal wan-niḥal* (ed. M. Badrân, Cairo, 1328/1910-1375/1955), 120; this bald a statement of the question in these terms may well be original with al-Ğubbâ'î, having been avoided by earlier writers (cf. al-Ğuwaynî, *Iršâd* [ed. M. Mûsâ and A. 'Abd al-Ḥamîd, Cairo, 1369/1950], 187f, the reference to the *muta'aḫḫirîn*, and also *infra ad K. al-Luma'* § 90 and §§ 120f, though al-Ğubbâ'î is not mentioned by name in the latter); cf. the discussion of the terms *ḫalq* and *ḫâliq* in 'Abd al-Ğabbâr, *op. cit.*, 379ff. At any rate, that this was indeed the center of the question as clearly understood by al-Aš'arî and his opponents is manifest in the whole discussion of the problem of what is subject to God's causality *(maqdûr Allâh)* in its relation (or opposition) to what is subject to man's causality *(maqdûr al-'abd)*, on which see below.

creation as the source of its actuality, so that in the question of whether something can be subject to the causality of two agents, *scil.*, God and the human agent, they, together with other mu'tazilî authors, held that only one can be said to be the cause (1). In this way, man's independence as a creative cause became in some degree absolute within the limits of the range of his potential activity. Such a notion however, was not generally congenial to the most basic understanding which the principal body of Islamic thinkers had of the ultimate structure of the universe (2).

Al-Aš'arî's solution to the question is, on the whole, quite simple and certainly not at all obtuse, as some have suggested. In outline it is this: man's power of causation, like every other "accident" of his being, is created by God. In this way then, since God is in reality the cause of man's generated causality *(qudra muḥdaṯa)*, He is in the strictest sense the creator of the event which is brought about through that causality, as the creator of the immediate act of causation. This is in notable contrast to the common mu'tazilite position, mentioned above, according to which God is in no sense ontologically the cause of the human act. Al-Aš'arî's position however, should not be taken in any simplistic sense either as a denial of secondary causality or of the reality of the human agency in the performance of the act, as indeed has been done (3). Furthermore, it should be noted that al-Aš'arî does not deny the reality of "natural" causes or of secondary causality other than man's; but rather, since such causality does not fall within the range of the problem of *qudra* as it was universally understood, he simply does not discuss it (4). Insofar as man is the agent *(fâ'il)* of the event

(1) Cf. *Maqâlât*, 549ff and al-Ğuwaynî, *op. cit.*, 187f and also the remarks *ibid.*, 196f.

(2) This is witnessed not only by the triumph (ultimately almost absolute) of the system of al-Aš'arî but can also be seen in the thoroughly deterministic system of Avicenna, which itself, no doubt because of the basically Islamic character of its fundamental orientation, came in subsequent centuries to have so profound an influence in almost all areas of Muslim speculation.

(3) Cf. for example, McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 58, n. 15, *ad* § 91.

(4) Cf. *infra ad* § 98 and § 107; it may be noted that the question is likewise omitted by 'Abd al-Ğabbâr in his treatment of the problem of *qudra*.

which proceeds from his power of causation, he is the true cause of the entire event (cf. *infra ad* §§ 92f). Man is created in the totality of his being, of which consequently there is no aspect which is not utterly dependent upon God's universal creation at any moment, but God does not perform the human act even though He is the creator of man's power of causation. The act is entirely the agent's insofar as it is determined by him, but his existence, the actuality of his Being as agent *(fâ'il qâdir)* and also the existence of the effect come to be and subsist in Being through the creative causality of God (1).

The term for the free human act in al-Aš'arî's works is *fi'l muktasab*, while the term *iktisâb* is used to describe the relationship between the created agent and his act. Al-Aš'arî, as we noted above, clearly recognised the fact of more than one kind of secondary causality. However, for the kalâm, the only true efficient causality is that of the agent who knowingly intends and wills his act and *kasb/iktisâb* is thus used to describe the relationship of such a created agent to his act, as opposed to those events which belong to no such agent (*lâ yaktasibuhâ aḥadun;* cf. *infra ad* § 98). Watt is no doubt correct in his analysis of the origin of the word as a specialised term for the free human act and that as such it is based on the koranic use of the words, (2) though as a technical term it is more highly

(1) It is to be noted that there is nothing here concerning God's determination of the human event or of the "freedom of the will"; in the *Luma'*, all discussion of the will of the human agent in the structure of the act is omitted, as has been noted. Again, though ultimately all Being proceeds from God's creative power of causation *(qudrat al-qadîm)*, according to His will, the author says nothing about God's wilful determination of human acts of the will, since that is not a part of the probelm of *qudra* as he construed it. Generally on the aš'arite conception of the will, cf. *Šarḥ al-Mawâqif* (Cairo, 1325/1907) 6, 64 and 71f. Though our sources say little on the subject, I doubt that al-Aš'arî would allow an absolute determination of the will any more than does Ibn Taymîya, even though such a conclusion may be rather difficult to avoid within the overall structure of his system.

(2) The term was used much in this sense well before al-Aš'arî, as M. Watt has pointed out (cf. references cited above, p. 15, n. 2) by Ḍirâr and an-Naǧǧâr and may well have been used as a general term for the act for which the human agent was himself fully responsible, by others as well, who did not hold to the theory of *kasb* to explain the ontological structure of the human act; as for example the term *'ilm iktisâb* seems to have been used by abû l-Hudhayl in the sense of knowledge which

specified than this. A careful examination of the text of the *Luma'* shows quite clearly that the basic sense of "acquire" is itself central to al-Aš'arî's understanding; i.e., it does basically refer to the "acquisition" from God of a created power of efficient causality by the human agent. The term does not occur in §§ 122ff, where he discusses human causality in itself as the act of the agent, until he introduces the question of its ground in God's creative act in § 128 (cf. *infra ad loc.*). On the other hand, it also includes the relation between the agent and his act insofar as he is a moved mover whose being is othered by the realisation of his act (cf. *ad* § 96 and § 127) and so designates a specific relationship between agent and act. In this, it expressly excludes and distinguishes the causality of the material, human agent from God's transcendent causality; God, being world-transcendent, is not "involved" in the acts of which He is the ultimate cause and agent *(fâ'il qâdir)*. He cannot, to use an example of al-Aš'arî, be called an "impregnator of women" even though it is He who creates the pregnancy (1). In the terminology of the *Luma'*, He creates the act for or in another, a formula whose meaning we shall take up in detail below (*ad* §§ 97f).

The tale does not end here however, for if we take the general structure of the problem of created causality as seen by the Baṣra school of the Mu'tazila as the point of departure, al-Aš'arî's shift of perspective is yet more thoroughgoing. Again leaving aside those who held, like an-Naẓẓâm, that the principle of man's action and causality was his "nature" *(kiyân/ṭabî'a)* as constituted by the "natures" *(ṭabâ'i')* of the material elements of his body and soul and also those who held that it lay in the physical well-being of the body, although most of the Mu'tazila

a person acquires through experience or reflection, as opposed to *'ilm iḍṭirâr/ḍarûrî*, innate or necessary knowledge.

(1) 'Abd al-Qâdir al-Baġdâdî, *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*[a] (ed. al-Kawthari, Cairo, 1367/1948), 110. This is against al-Ğubbâ'î (cf. *Maqâlât*, 194f); for the interpretation of the statement by the Mu'tazila cf. 'Abd al-Ğabbâr, *op. cit.*, 354. The question is probably very old, as the creation of the child begotten in adultery is mentioned in the *risâla* to the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik attributed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrî (cf. *Der Islam* 21 [1933], p. 74).

took *qudra/istiṭâ'a* as a more or less permanent attribute *('araḍ)* of man's being, it is defined generally in terms of the single event towards which it is directed, so that one speaks in terms of the single act of *qudra*. This is reflected most clearly in the arguments concerning whether the act of *qudra* is terminated immediately before the event ("in the first moment") or whether it perdures through the actualisation of the act ("in the second moment"), most of the Mu'tazila holding that it perdures through the second moment, because the occurence of the concomitant act through a power of causality which is not actually present is impossible (1). The same basic thesis is also reflected in the discussions of the secondary result which takes place outside the agent *(fi'l mutawallid)* (2). For most of the Mu'tazila, *qudra* is the power to effect the act and as such stands in "an indifferent relationship to the two poles of the act" (*scil.* the performance of the act or its omission) until the act of the will determines which of the two contraries will be effected (3), at which moment the actual event is accomplished through it (4). Whatever the disagreements, *qudra/istiṭâ'a* is the *power through which the individual act is brought to realisation*. For most of the Mu'tazila (including al-Ğubbâ'î), the actuality of the *qudra* precedes the realisation of the specific act, being equally, in the subject, the power to perform it or leave it undone *(qudratun 'alà l-fi'li wa-tarkihi)*. To the extent that man's generated power causation precedes his act and that, as already present *(mawǧûd)* in him, the determination of its actualisation is subject simply to his act of the will, it is his in a quite absolute sense. This is quite in harmony with their notion that man alone is the efficient cause of his act, "that there cannot be two efficient causes [*qâdirân*] for a single event" (i.e., God cannot also be the agent or creator of the effect). If the efficient causation of the event lies within man's free potential of deter-

(1) *Maqâlât*, 232.
(2) *Ibid.*
(3) Cf. *Šarḥ al-Mawâqif*, 6, 64.
(4) Cf. generally *Maqâlât*, 234f; there is some disagreement about the "employment of the *qudra*" in the actual performance of the act, but it is almost entirely a verbal disagreement over the definition of terms.

mination and action, then the realisation of the event is uniquely man's.

As I tried to suggest above, the notion of *qudra* for most of the early mutakallimîn is not at all that of a "potency" in the Aristotelian sense of the word, not a "power to act" which is actualised at the moment of the realisation of the act; rather it is the power of efficient causality which is subject to the determination of the agent and, so determined, is the power of efficient causality through which the event takes place. Again, though for many of the Mu'tazila the concept may come quite close to involving the physical force employed in the realisation of the act, it is clearly not so for al-Ğubbâ'î, who held that although the event takes place "through it", it is nevertheless "not employed" *(lâ tusta'malu)* in the act (1). It is important to keep in mind here that one does not speak of the *potentiality* of the power of causation before the realisation of the act and of its *actuality* in its realisation. This is due in no wise to any kind of naïveté on the part of the earlier mutakallimîn, for naïve or simplistic in their philosophical and theological thought they were not, nor to their ignorance of the classical terms and their meanings. Rather, the notion of potency and act, as they are formulated and understood by Aristotle and in the Greek tradition, simply have no place in the metaphysics of atoms and "accidents"; (2) the "accident" *('araḍ)* or attribute either exists as actually present *(mawǧûd)* in the subject or does not (3) and if it does not, its potentiality (to the extent that we can speak of such) to exist in the thing resides neither in it nor in the thing in which it may inhere, but in the actual power of efficient causality

(1) *Maqâlât*, 235. The reasoning given is that the act of "employment" *(isti'mâl)* comes to inhere in the thing employed and this, from his standpoint, would involve the inherence of one "accident" in another. Had he wished, however, to speak of the use and transfer of energy, it would have been easy enough to speak of the force in the efficient member *(ǧâriḥa)* (which is mentioned in *Maqâlât*, 232) and somehow to have avoided the problem.

(2) Later, the possibility of existence *(imkân al-wuǧûd)* of things, their necessity or impossibility, comes to be a central question for the kalâm, but this is a period when the kalâm had begun to come under the influence of the falsafa.

(3) The debate, already prominent in the time of al-Aš'arî, regarding the status of the non-present in existence *(ma'dûm)* does not affect this question.

(qudra) which belongs to the agent who can effect its presence. *Qudra*, in short, is the actuality of the *qâdir* as such.

Al-Aš'arî then (though he was not the first to do so) limits the presence in the human agent of the power to act to the moment of the realisation of the act (cf. *infra*). Where for most of the Mu'tazila *qudra* was indifferently a power to perform the act or not, for al-Aš'arî it becomes the "attribute which specifically determines [*ṣifa muḫaṣṣiṣa*] the realisation of one of the two poles of the *maqdûr*" (1). Thus, at the moment of the realisation of the act, God creates in the human agent "a generated power of causality" through which the act is realised. The efficient causality is not God's however, for it is created as an "accident" belonging to the human agent and it is from this created causality that the event takes place. The notion of man's *qudra* is thus restricted to the actuality of the agent in the act of his causation of the event; it is the "power of causation" in act at the moment of the realisation of the event (2). In

(1) *Šarḥ al-Mawâqif*, 6, 71.

(2) R. Brunschvig suggests (« Devoir et Pouvoir », *Studia Islamica* 20 [1964], 9ff), following van den Bergh (*op. cit.*, 37ff), that in the debate between al-Aš'arî and the Mu'tazila on the question of whether the act of *qudra* precedes the realisation of the act or is simultaneous with it, the position of the former is to be compared to that of the Megarians. The analogy is indeed tempting, especially since the kalâm shows many dependencies upon the Stoa and the Greek atomists (some of which, in regard to this question, are brought out by van den Bergh, *loc. cit.*). Regarding the question of *qudra* however, one should not be misled into reading the analogy too broadly. *Qudra* as I have tried to indicate, is in no wise a δύναμις in the Aristotelian sense and where the overall, basic attitude towards the conception of prior potentiality which one finds through an analysis of the kalâm authors is very much like that of the Megarians, Stoics, and Greek atomists (cf. N. Hartmann, « Der Megarische und der Aristotelische Möglichkeitsbegriff », *Sitzbr. d. Preussischen Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl.*, 1937, 51ff), *qudra* is not primarily involved. The systems of the chief authors of the Mu'tazila (abû l-Hudhayl, al-Ğubbâ'î, etc.) were as opposed to the Aristotelian notion of δύναμις as the basis of the ontology of change and becoming as were al-Aš'arî and his followers. *Qudra* as an "accident" *('araḍ)* is pertinent only in the discussion of the "knowing, willing, intending agent" and is, like all other "accidents", fundamentally "atomic" and discrete in its being. The Mu'tazila insisted on its being prior to the event and relative to both the posited act and its contrary in order to preserve the freedom and spontaneity of the human act but never looked upon it as a "potentiality" towards becoming, even though such a conception may well be an inescapable concomitant of the question, if it be viewed from another perspective. Even as a freedom of determination, the degree of spontaneity allowed the human agent is minimal (cf.

that God creates it at the moment of the act, He is, in a sense, the creator of the act, but in that the *qudra* through which the event takes place is in every respect a determinant attribute of the being of the human agent (for as a created accident inhering in him it does not differ ontologically from the others which constitute his being at the moment) the causality is his and he is in a true sense the agent of the act.

A great part of the misunderstanding of al-Aš'arî's position on this whole question and the tendency of some scholars to see in it a merely verbal (and not altogether honest) affirmation of human causality while at the same time upholding a conservative notion of the universal creativity of God, would seem in great part to find its source in a failure to grasp distinctly and clearly the meaning of the terms of the problem as the author construed it and a parallel failure to restrict the problem to the limits within which it was conceived and formulated.

* * *

With this introduction then, we can proceed with the analysis of the sections of the *Luma'* in which the author deals with the question of *qudra.*

The organisation of this portion of the work is thus (1):

§§ 82-121 : HUMAN CAUSALITY IS CREATED.

generally my forthcoming *Metaphysics of Created Being according to abû l-Hudhayl al-'Allâf*). In short, the early kalâm, mu'tazilite as well as aš'arite, was quite "megarian" in its fundamental outlook and, taking islamic atomism as a whole, al-Aš'arî, by his restriction of the act of *qudra* to the moment of the realisation of the act, produces, in a certain sense, a more self-consistent and homogeneous system that that of his mu'tazilî opponents.

(1) The basic division of the question of *qudra* into two sections, treating first that of the relation between God's causality and man's and second the character of created causality considered in itself, would seem to be traditional. The same division is found in the *Iršâd* of al-Ğuwaynî (pp. 187ff and pp. 210f) and also in the *Šarḥ al-uṣûl al-ḫamsa* of 'Abd al-Ğabbâr (pp. 323ff and pp. 390 ff). Within the general conception of the whole context, common to their respective schools, the latter places these within the larger section on divine justice *(al-'adl)* while the former treates them as altogether separate questions previous to this taking up the question of God's justice.

§§ 82-84 : Affirmation of Creation of Human Acts on the basis of the *Koran*.

§§ 85-86 : That the true efficient cause determines the being of the caused in its total reality.

§§ 87-95 : God's causality and the createdness of human causality:
§ 87: That God alone is the true efficient cause of any act or event;
§§ 88-90: That God is not the immediate agent who performs the act (88f); the place and degree of human causality in relation to the act (90);
§§ 91-94: That all events are alike created, those which are freely performed by the created agent as well as those which are not.
§ 95: Summary on God's creation of human causation.

§§ 96-100 : God as Transcendent Creator:
§ 96: The Creator of a thing is not altered by the act of creation;
§ 97: The relationship of the transcendent creator to the created act of the human agent;
§ 98: The relationship of the transcendent creator to the created event which does not depend upon the causality of a created agent.
§ 99: Corollary regarding the *Koran* as the uncreated word;
§ 100: Affirmation of the efficacy of human effort and action.

§§ 101-107 : God's Goodness and the Problem of the Existence of Evil:
§§ 101-5: In what way it can be said that God's Decree involves evil;
§§ 106-7: God's goodness and providence and the question of the existence of created evil.

§§ 108-118 : Interpretation of disputed verses of the *Koran*, involving God's decree, the universality of His providence, the "Truth" of creation.

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§ 129: Its relation to the efficient member;
§ 130: Its relation to the "accident" of life in the agent;
§ 131: Its relation to the acquired skill and ability of the agent;
§ 132: Its relation to the agent's freedom from restraint and impediment.

§§ 133-134 : Confirmatory citations of verses of the *Koran.*

§§ 135-139 : Created Causality in its relation to Absolute Incapacity *(al-'aǧz):*
§§ 135-136: That *'aǧz* extends properly to both of a pair of contraries and so is not analogous to *qudra.*
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§§ 140-164 : *Quaestiones Disputatae* (Replies to various objections based mostly on disputed verses of the *Koran*):
§§ 140-143: The simultaneity of the act of *qudra* with the realisation of the act.
§§ 144-145: Material capability as distinguished from the *istiṭâ'a* which is an attribute of the Being of the agent.

§§ 146-149: *Qudra* and *'aǧz* and man's relationship to God's command; moral obligation;
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* * *

HUMAN CAUSALITY AS CREATED

His basic thesis al-Aš'arî first enunciates (§§ 82-4) through the citation of *Koran* 37.94/96, "God has created both you and what you do." (1) This verse has been widely used by orthodox thinkers as a "proof-text" for the universality of God's creation and is introduced here as a kind of *sed contra.* To this then he adds immediately the citation of 46.13/14 ("... as a reward for what they did") in order first to confirm the validity of his having taken the *mâ ta'malûna* of 37.94 in its most general sense and secondly to affirm that it is precisely their acts *(mâ kânû ya'malûna)* which God has created for which men are rewarded, the justice of God's judgement being assumed. The parallelism of wording is sufficient to validate the connection of the two verses (cf. also § 84). This is significant not simply because al-Aš'arî wishes to put on as resoundingly conservative a traditionalist dress as possible, but more especially because the chief effort of the following paragraphs (§§ 82-121) will be to show that the fact of God's creating those events which are most properly the acts of the human agent neither robs the agent of his true and proper causality nor alienates from him his real possession of or responsibility for his actions.

What follows then (§ 83f) is simply to confirm the validity of his interpretation of this first citation, viz., that "what you do" is to be taken in the sense of "your action" and should not be read to mean the thing which you have made or the material

(1) The same verse occurs in the preface to the *'aqîda* of Ibn Ḥanbal (*cit. supra*, p. 15, n. 1), p. 268 to prove the same point and, again, is cited by al-Baġdâdî (*Uṣûl ad-dîn* [Istanbul, 1346/1928], 135) to prove against the ǧahmîya that although God is the sole creator, man does have his own proper actions *(a'mâl).*

object of your act. That the argument is casuistic need not concern us since he is not here trying to prove his thesis but to prove the applicability of the citation and the meaning of the koranic text (1). So also his citation here of the distinction between the material upon which the agent acts and the act which resides in the material and the act of the agent which takes place in him, is only to support the validity of the application of 37.94 (2), and will be taken up separately and discussed in the following paragraphs.

In the following section (§ 85f) al-Aš'arî begins the formal analysis and argumentation of his overall thesis. He states that the total, essential content of the Being of any event or act, considered as an essential unity (its *ḥaqîqa*—the fullness of its Being in being what it is) is produced by some agent *(fâ'il)* who determines it in its totality through his knowing intention. The example which he has chosen, faith *('îmân)* and unbelief *(kufr)*, though superficially "loaded", is altogether appropriate from the author's standpoint. It should be noted in this regard that although the matter is never formally treated in the *Luma'*, al-Aš'arî limits the direct effect of human causality to those acts which take place in the agent (cf. *infra*, § 127), i.e., to motion (specifically the movement of his members—*ǧawâriḥ*) and those other acts which are realised in him, such as lying, believing, thinking, speaking, etc. (3) Faith or unbelief, which

(1) On the philological difficulty in reading the verse in this way, cf. Râzî, *Tafsîr* (ed. M. M. 'Abd al-Ḥamîd, Cairo, 1352/1933), 26, 149.

(2) The grammatical issue of the use of the term *mâ* in *mâ ta'malûn* (treated by Râzî, *loc. cit.*) is not explicitly raised and may well have been specifically and intentionally avoided (cf. al-Aš'arî's apparent neglect of one crucial aspect of an argument regarding the grammatical structure of 2.184/180 in §§ 141-3); where Râzî points out that one cannot properly read "you and your action" (as opposed to "you and what you have made") al-Aš'arî argues from the more general sense of the phrase in its use in the *Koran* and herein on the wider possibility and limits of its possible meaning. It should be noted however that in isolation one may easily hear the verse in the sense upon which the author insists and that the arguments detailed by Râzî represent a much later and perhaps more refined state of the casuistry of koranic verses. The grammatical issue is also skipped altogether by 'Abd al-Ǧabbâr in his discussion of the verse *(op. cit.*, 382) as he treates only the *mâ tanḥitûn*.

(3) Most of the mutakallimîn, in one way or another, restricted the immediate human act *(fi'l mubâšir)* in some such fashion, the results which follow from the

are the just basis of man's reward or punishment in the next life, are human acts according to which the human agent determines himself in his attitude towards God. In the present context belief (as also unbelief) is taken not as reduced to the minimal "affirmation" as it is in the *Luma'* (§§ 180f), but in the broader sense given it elsewhere by al-Aš'arî according to which it includes both the verbal affirmation and works (1). Faith and unbelief, though complex, represent single acts in the being of the believer or unbeliever. He is a believer or unbeliever as he determines himself in his action. As elements which qualify the reality of the individual who is *mu'min* or *kâfir*, belief and unbelief have their own essential reality (which is not relational) as distinct attributes or qualities. Each is something in itself, having its own essential nature as a particular reality (cf. *infra ad* § 90). His argument then is this: the presence of faith comes to be immediately in and from him who is *mu'min* as also unbelief from him who is *kâfir* (2). He is unable, however, to determine the total content and nature of his faith or unbelief; as for example faith causes certain hardships upon the believer which are inherent in its nature *(ḥaqîqa)* but which the believer does not and cannot himself will as such, just as also the unbeliever does not himself intentionally will the real evil of his unbelief (3), of which, indeed, he is essentially ignorant. Human knowledge, in fact, does not encompass the totality of the Being of anything in its every aspect. Neither faith nor unbelief, in the total content of its essential reality can be determined by the will of the immediate human agent from whom its real and concrete existence in the world comes to be; nor, on the other hand, can material reality, considered in itself as material,

act and are altogether outside and apart from the subject being discussed under the question of *tawallud;* the nature of the restriction of the immediate act varies considerably from author to author according to the general structure of his system; cf. generally *Maqâlât,* 410ff.

(1) Cf. *Ibâna* (Cairo, ND), 10 and *Maqâlât,* 293.

(2) Cf. also § 181.

(3) The goodness or evil of a thing is in all cases determined by God, according to al-Aš'arî. McCarthy however is wrong in saying that things are not objectively good or evil, since either quality is inherent in the total structure of a thing's being as this Being is determined by God's creation of it.

be the cause of the reality of anything (cf. § 86 at the end). God must therefore be the agent who has determined the reality of faith and unbelief in the full content of their Being.

Al-Aš'arî denied, against al-Ğubbâ'î, that a being has in itself any Being other than the individual act of its real presence in the world *(wuğûd = huwîya)*, so that to be the true cause of the coming to be *(iḥdâṯ)* of any thing is to be its cause in the fullness and totality of its Being. On this basis then (though the principle is not formally enunciated in the *Luma'*) and on the basis of §§ 85f, he then affirms (§ 87) that in the strictest sense, even in the case of events which are performed by a created agent and realised through his causality ("the occurence of the act which is *kasb*"), God alone can be the true agent *(fâ'il)* responsible for the realisation out of non-being *(iḫtirâ')* of the event as it exists in the fullness of its essential Being *('alà ḥaqîqatihi)*. He goes on (§§ 88f) to say that although God is the creator and in the fullest sense agent *(fâ'il)* also of the act of the creature, it does not not follow that God must perforce be the one who actually performs the act (the *muktasib*). This affirmation he establishes (§ 89) by showing that by definition the terms *fâ'il* and *muktasib* are not coëxtensive. The distinction is here quite clear and not merely terminological: the event takes place through or by the created power of the one who actually performs the act and not through some other power (cf. also *infra ad* § 92) but, on the other hand, the causality of the created agent is not sufficient to determine the entire reality of the event. From these two premises the conclusion follows quite easily. In the case of "necessary motion" (i.e., that not effected and determined by the will and intention of a created agent) the true cause or the mover need not be himself moved (something impossible in God) nor need the moved be the true agent of the motion. So also, he goes on to say, in the case of an act which the human agent performs according to his own will and intention *(kasb)*, the fact that the act takes place (comes to *be*) indicates that there must be some agent ultimately responsible for the realisation of the existence of the act in the fullness of its Being but it does not thereby indicate either that this agent is the created agent who performs the act (the *mukta-*

sib) or, on the other hand, that the created agent who performs the act is the one who determined the total reality of the Being of the act. God cannot be the *muktasib* since by definition the event takes place through a created power of efficient causality *(qudra muḥdaṯa)*, while God's power of causation is trancendent, an absolute and uncreated attribute of His Being (cf. also *infra ad* § 96).

This further specification of *kasb* and *muktasib* in terms of a created power of efficient causality he then takes up in § 90, saying that in his performance of the act, the human agent does not produce the thing in its total content. The true sense of the statement that "he has acquired [*iktasaba*] an act of unbelief" is that "he has disbelieved through a created power of causation [here *quwwa*]" (1). To say that he disbelieves is not to say that it is he who has brought into existence the reality of unbelief in its essential nature, independtly and entirely through a causality whose realisation and determination resides exclusively in himself, dependent upon his knowledge and intention (cf. also *infra ad* §§ 120f). The act of unbelief is realised through the causality of the unbeliever but the essential nature of unbelief is something determined by God. The same analysis is applied to the acts of lying and moving: the one who lies and by this act is a liar even though it is through his own intrinsic causality that the act of lying has come to exist in him and for him, is not the one who determined the essential nature of lying as it exists in him, as also the one who moves and in whom therefore motion exists in the fullness of its essential nature, is not the agent who has ultimately determined the essential nature of the movement as movement. To say thus that "it is hard to escape the conclusion that the liar, according to Ash-'arî, is under the same compulsion to lie as he is in any of his involuntary acts" (McCarthy, n. 14, *ad loc.*) is to miss the whole point which the author is trying to make. The question of the freedom or contingent spontaneity of human acts has not been raised at all, but only the ontological order of causes of Being

(1) On the use of *quwwa* as the equivalent of *istiṭâ'a* cf. the remarks of 'Abd al-Ǧabbār, *op, cit.*, 393.

and the place of human causality within this order. The relationship of God's causality to the act as an act of the human agent al-Aš'arî will take up in a subsequent paragraph.

Createdness is a fact of all Being other than that of God Himself, and again the author goes back to his insistence on the fact that the voluntary human act whose realisation proceeds in its entirety immediately from the causality of the human agent is no less created than his involuntary acts or those events which do not involve any created agent.

His initial argument (§ 91) is again based on the principle of sufficient cause and, though here much abbrieviated, is one which in one form or another, is common to the discussion of the question of causality and the necessity of the result through its cause in almost all Islamic speculation, whether that of the kalâm or the falsafa. It should be kept in mind here that in speaking of the Being of movement, belief, or unbelief, etc., in their essential nature or in the fullness of their being what they are (their *ḥaqîqa)* al-Aš'arî in no wise means to indicate any universal or anything like "essence" as opposed to the thing's actual existence. The *ḥaqîqa* of a thing is the total content of the reality of the individual existence *(huwîya)* in its actual existence *(wuǧûd)* as that particular act which it is. Again, he has here omitted—not denied—any mention of secondary causes (*asbâb*, in the formal terminology), since his problem is here that of the willing agent as cause, not of the physics of natural causes. The act or event which does not depend upon the will, knowledge, and intention and therefore upon the causality of a created agent (here movement is the example: *ḥarakat al-iḍṭirâr*) must exist at a particular time and in a particular substrate; and the reality of its Being, which is its existence in time and place, is specifically determined not by itself or any other purely material cause (cf. § 86) but by the cause which knows and wills its existence in the particular time and place. Such a cause can only be God. So also, he says, is the case of man's voluntary act. The actuality of the Being of any created being is dependent upon the cause which specifically determines its individual existence in all the particular determinations which constitute its Being. The human agent, as he is not himself

the cause of his own Being, cannot in any way be said to be, of and by himself, the total cause of the event. Thus, regarding the Being of any event, considered within the totality of causes and determinents of its being, intrinsic and extrinsic, God alone is the sufficient cause in that it is He alone who knows exhaustively the total order of Being and the place of every being within this universal order and it must be He therefore who has created the human agent and his particular act of efficient causality (1).

In the following three paragraphs (§§ 92-4) the author further details his thesis that, by definition, involuntary acts and those subject to the determination of the human agent are alike created by God and that the fact of their creation does not vitiate the distinction between the two categories. As if to answer the objection that, as he construes the problem insisting that all acts are equally created by God, that is, if one act is "necessary" (involuntary and in no way subject to determination by the will of the person in whom and from whom it takes place), then all must be so and that if one act is voluntary and subject to the free determination of the agent *(kasb)*, then all must be alike subject to his determination, al-Aš'arî remarks that the distinction between the two categories of action is immediately self-evident, as for example between the movement of a person afflicted with partial paralysis or palsy and the voluntary acts of walking, fleeing, etc. In the former case the act is characterised by the fact of the absolute incapacity *('aǧz)* of the person to determine the act, so that it does not in any real sense take place through his free causal determination and in the latter "the essential character of the act which is freely determined by the agent [*kasb*] is that the thing *take place from the one who performs it* through a created act of efficient causality [*biquwwatin muḥdaṯa*]". Again here, as throughout the *Luma'*, although he does not go into what we might consider sufficient detail in explaining the full implication of what he says, it is quite apparent that he means that the event takes place fully and

(1) This argument is drawn out in detail in many later works; cf. for example, Baġdâdî, *Uṣûl ad-dîn*, 133 and Šahrastânî, *Nihâya* (ed. A. Guillaume, Oxford, 1934) 73. However, one must be very cautious in reading back into the thought of al-Aš'arî the elaborations of his later followers, particularly those of Râzî.

exclusively through the "created act of efficient causality", God's creating the act consisting precisely in that He creates the total reality of the human agent, including the actuality of his being as agent and cause. Strictly then we should say that God creates the event through the generated causality of the human agent (1). From the standpoint of the human agent the acts are thus distinguished through a function of *qudra/kasb* (proper causality/free realisation of voluntary act) on the one hand and of *'aǧz/ḍarûra* (total absence of willed causal determination/necessity) on the other, not in the fact of their being created, since they share this in the very fact of their existence in time and place, just as the fact of existence is common to motion and body (i.e., accident and substrate) alike, even though they are totally different in the mode of their Being (§ 93).

In no wise, thus, is his distinction "in the last analysis, a matter of extrinsic denomination" (McCarthy, *ad loc.* n. 17) (2), but on the contrary a completely valid ontological distinction. If, he says (§ 94), any being which comes to be through the immediate causality and according to the determination of an agent other than God *(waqa'a maqdûran li-ġayri llâh)* has its existence in complete exclusion of God's act of creation, then the principle that God creates and determines all things in the fullness of their Being is vitiated, not simply in regard to human acts but also in regard to all other areas of Being. Metaphysically this position is unassailable; God is either the transcendent source and cause of all Being or is a being among beings, a cause among causes (3).

(1) Cf. *Šarḥ al-Mawâqif*, 6, 85.

(2) Cf. the position of 'Abd al-Ǧabbar who asks (*op. cit.*, 372) whether al-Aš'arî's distinction between acquired and necessary motion is anything more than verbal (cf. also *ibid.*, 423)! In his argumentation however (372f and 427), the Qâḍî steadfastly refuses to recognise the ontological distinction which al-Aš'arî makes and so does not really take the problem up on the level on which it is posed. (Cf. also McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 57, n. 11 and 59, n. 16.)

(3) From the standpoint of the polemics of § 94 it might be noted that just as his opponents are unwilling to give any recognition to al-Aš'arî's distinctions concerning the total, sufficient causality of the Being of anything, so also he refuses to allow the distinctions which al-Ǧubbâ'î and his school made regarding the causation of Being *(iḥdâṯ)* on the part of the created agent (cf. references *supra*, n. 24, n. 1). The question is however, much more than simply one of polemical intransigence, since

In sum, to paraphrase the text (§ 95), "God is more strictly the cause of that of which we are the cause, since it is through His causality that we are causes;" what proceeds from our causality He has created and what does not take place, as not resulting from our causality, He has left uncreated.

There follows then a series of *questiones disputatae (masâ'il)*, in replying to which al-Aš'arî takes the opportunity to further elucidate his position.

Against an objection, based on the position of al-Ğubbâ'î (cf. *supra*) to the effect that if the realisation of an act by a human agent, according to his own will and determination, does in reality involve an act of creation *(ḫalq)*, why should we not thus consider the human agent the creator of the act, he notes first that strictly he did not say that the free human act *(kasb)* is an act of creation but rather that the act of creation which is involved is that God create the causality of the human agent. Then, since the thesis that the realisation of the free human act involves an act of creation in total exclusion of God's creative causality is altogether excluded (cf. *supra*, § 90 and *infra*, §§ 120f), al-Aš'arî argues that if we were to say that while the act of creation belongs to God, the human agent is strictly the creator of the act, then it would follow therefore that the relationship between the creator and the act is inevitably that of the agent who actually performs the act (i.e., a relationship of the structure of *iktisâb*), so that we shall be forced to hold that in those acts which do not come into being through the agency of a created agent, who freely wills and intends them, God is the performer of the act (1). However, as will be brought out later (§ 127), the *kasb* act, most strictly understood, takes place within the agent *(muktasib)* so that consequently, if in the case of involuntary motions, etc., God must be considered *muktasib*

it involves on either side, the detailed structure of the entire system. Al-Aš'arî's absolute refusal to consider the mu'tazilite distinctions in the term "creation" *(ḫalq)* and to allow the use of the term *iḥdâṯ* of the act of the human agent considered in himself, is intimately bound together with his conception of the nature of the Being of beings as well as of the structure and place of the knowledge of the cause in relation to the caused; cf. *supra ad* §§ 86f.

(1) For the polemical assertion by the Mu'tazila that God would have thus to be called *muktasib*, cf. 'Abd al-Ğabbâr, *op. cit.*, 369.

of the act, He cannot be the transcendent ground and source of all Being, but will, on the contrary, be a moved mover, whose being is altered through and in the performance of the act.

By way of further elucidation of his meaning, he notes then (§ 97)—formulating what is the core of his understanding of *kasb/iktisâb*—that the act is the act of the material agent or subject in which it is realised as an act. If, in virtue of His creating them, we were to predicate of God the acts which He creates in the world, then no act could properly be predicated of any material creature as being truly the act of that creature: "if God were unjust for the reason that He is the ground of the Being of injustice, then no creature would be unjust", i.e., if the act of injustice were to exist in God then it could not exist in any creature. As the ultimate ground and creator of all Being, however, God is world-transcendent. Thus al-Aš'arî says that "God creates [for example] injustice as belonging to another"; that is, He creates the act in that He is the ground of its Being, but the act is the act of the Being of the subject in which it has its existence *(wuǧûd)*. If created acts and events were to belong to and to be predicated of God on the basis of His being the true and sufficient cause of their Being, we should then have to predicate of Him all acts as such and He would be willing, desiring, moving, etc., through and in the temporal acts of willing, desiring, moving, etc., which belong to and take place in material creatures.

The same objection is then renewed (§ 98) in a slightly different form as one asks regarding injustice which takes place but of which there is no agent who performs the act—no *muktasib*. Here again is involved God's creation of events in terms of the problem of *ta'dîl*, i.e., of the possibility of God's doing wrong or injustice to his creatures, something which the Mu'tazila denied absolutely and made a central theme of their polemics. The question is very important, albeit taken up but briefly, since it involves events which cause difficulty or misery to human beings and for which there can be said, according to the principles of al-Aš'arî's theology, no proper agent (no agent who has determined the event through the intention of his will—no *fâ'il qâṣid murîd*) other than God himself. To be included would be

"natural" events as well as harm or injury inflicted through the involuntary act of another person.

God is not the *muktasib* of the act; His being is not qualified or altered by its realisation, wherefore He cannot be called unjust on its account. The quasi causality of purely material causes is a subject which does not fall within the framework of the problem as here posed, since they cannot be considered as true efficient causes, having no knowledge or intention of their effects. Consequently they are omitted from the discussion. It is nevertheless quite clear that al-Aš'arî does recognise the fact of the operation of purely material causes. Where there is no willing, intending agent intervening between God and the immediate realisation of the act, the event does in fact take place through secondary causes; but since the determination of its realisation cannot be ascribed to material, secondary causes, the act of efficient causality belongs to God alone, in that it is He alone who can be said to have willed them and determined their being in a knowing intention. Such events however cannot be ascribed to God as "His acts", i.e., as qualifying His Being insofar as He is the cause of their existence, since He cannot be *muktasib* of any created act (§ 96f). Such acts are said to have no *muktasib*.

In § 99 again we find another objection based, from the author's standpoint, on the failure to make the distinctions set forth above (particularly in §§ 96f) and reflecting some of the disputes regarding the createdness of the *Koran:* if God created the act in the fullness of its Being, can He not be said to speak through the utterance of the created speaker"? The reply is as above, viz., that the act is created as belonging to another, not by God as His own act. His own utterance *(qawl, kalâm)* whereby He is called "speaking" *(mutakallim)* is, like His power of efficient causality, an uncreated attribute of His Being (1).

In the following three questions al-Aš'arî then takes up

(1) Regarding the thesis of God's speaking through the utterance of a created speaker (which is more or less that of the ǧahmîya) and the opposition to it of the orthodox thinkers, cf. R. Frank, "The Neoplatonism of Ǧahm b. Ṣafwân,", 419.

objections regarding God's providence and man's attitude towards it.

In § 100 the objection assumes the inefficacy of human action: "can man be other than subject to God's blessing for which he must give thanks or a trial under which he must bear up"? In reply the author insists on the real efficacy of human effort and action and man's ability to effect events, distinguishing between those stituations about which man can do nothing and those which he must strive to ameliorate. Al-Aš'arî gives no argument to support his position here, since the objection is captious in that it would eristically identify his position with that of the *muǧabbira* and since, on the other hand, against a mu'tazilî opponent he no doubt feels little need to establish the point. Further, since his central theme is the structure of *qudra* and not of man's freedom or spontaneity of action, the specific objection is not altogether pertinent to the discussion.

The following paragraphs (§§ 101-116), though ostensibly containing merely the treatment of a number of detached *quaestiones*, centering in §§ 108-116 around the interpretation of several disputed verses of the *Koran*, form a quite remarkably structured unit, centered on the question of the nature of creation and God's providence. Though the whole section follows the established pattern and conventional form of argumentation used throughout the *Luma'*, the unity of purpose is quite apparent in the order in which he passes from the admission of the existence of evil in creation as dependent ultimately upon God's will and "decree", affirming both the universality of His providence and His absolute transcendence as creator, to the affirmation that the Truth *(ḥaqq)* of each and every being in Being is grounded in God's creation of it, according to His eternal knowledge. The basic structure is quite "Greek" and specifically neoplatonic, although the general understanding as well as the detail of the exposition is uncompromisingly Islamic.

Falling quite properly into place after the introduction of § 100, the following two groups of paragraphs (§§ 101-3 and 104-5) involve the sense of the term "God's Decree" *(al-qaḍâ')*. In both cases the objection is set so as to place the author and his supporters in the position of having to say that God decrees evil

and that, to this extent, His decree is evil (§§ 101ff) or that "we are not satisfied or content with what God decrees" (§§ 104f). Al-Aš'arî says that we may say that God has decreed and determined *(qaḍà wa-qaddara)* evil or disobedience, in the same sense that He is the Creator of all Being and that nothing comes to be but what He wills to create but not in the sense that He specifically commands and approves such acts. Taking thus the term "God's decree" in the broadest sense, he allows that God's decree involves evil as well as good, but the terms evil, unbelief, etc., are not coextensive with the term "decree". To say that we are content with God's decree is not to say that we are content with the unbelief of the unbeliever (cf. also § 100). The whole question, posed thus, is, he notes (§ 103 and § 105), terminological or rhetorical and some of the more conservative, orthodox authorities are more restrictive in the use which they will allow of the terms.

The real question involved here, that of the justice and goodness of God and the implication that evil is to be attributed to God Himself if He is responsible for the existence of evil in the world, al-Aš'arî takes up in the following two paragraphs (§§ 106f) which, although indicated in the text as separate *quaestiones*, form but a single unit. The framework within which the problem is to be understood has already been set out, wherefore in reply (§ 107) the author merely reasserts the distinction made in §§ 96-99, that God does not Himself do evil but rather "evil is from God in that He creates evil belonging to another, not to Himself". Here again he notes that some of his fellows *(aṣḥâb)* distinguish between the universal attribution of creation, as a general providence *(bil-ǧumla)* and His creation of the isolated particular. This statement is of especial interest. The author quite clearly finds nothing in it which is in basic opposition to his own doctrine and, on the contrary, would seem to approve it. It is, in fact, to be noted that where al-'Aš'arî cites his *aṣḥâb* elsewhere in the *Luma'*, their opinions would seem generally to have a more conservative formulation than his own. His treatment of the question of God's decree in the preceding paragraphs, as also in § 98 where he made allowance for the results of natural and involuntary events, would seem to point to some such dis-

tinction, even though perhaps, al-Aš'arî was not himself altogether satisfied with the particular formulation, because it might tend to make it appear that there were events which escaped in some degree from God's omniscience and will. Since the question is not discussed, it is impossible to determine precisely what was the position of al-Aš'arî or of his companions. Given however the possibility suggested above (cf. note 2, p. 22) that there is some indication of a neoplatonic structure to his conception of sufficient causality, one may be justified in speculating that there is found here a reflection of something like the notions set forth in the two chapters περὶ προνοίας of the *Enneades* (for no being, it should be noted, is omitted from the content of νοῦς) (1).

The following paragraphs, which are divided into three sections (§§ 108-15, 116, 117f), all involve the interpretation of disputed verses which are put forth by the objector in order to establish the common mu'tazilite conception of *qudra* against that of al-Aš'arî. In considering the content and the argument of these paragraphs one should keep in mind the importance of the *textus litteralis* of the *Koran* in muslim theology, for the book was held by all alike, the Mu'tazila as well as al-Aš'arî and also the ḥanbalî traditionists, to be the paradigm of all truth: the Creator's revelation of the Truth of all Being *(al-ḥaqq)*, of Himself and of His creation. For this reason it was of the utmost importance for the mutakallimîn to establish the sense of any verse

(1) I do not in any way wish to suggest that there is any kind of direct influence of Plotinus or of Christian neoplatonism on al-Aš'arî or his immediate sources and predecessors, but simply want to suggest that the background is quite complex and contains many significant elements besides the frequently cited dependencies upon the Stoa and the atomists. The kalâm's formation of its own terminology and the unique way in which many questions were formulated and treated in isolation tended to obscure and cover all the traces of its background and the non-islamic sources of some of its basic philosophical theses and presuppositions. There was also, without doubt, at the outset, a purposeful burying of whatever non-islamic sources were consciously used, because of the generally poor standing of any teaching which belonged to the infidel and was not ostensibly based on the koranic revelation. There is therefore no reason to believe that al-Aš'arî was aware of using any sources which were not strictly the property of the kalâm, but we may have in this paragraph, along with the other indications cited above, some hint or reflection of a part of his intellectual background.

which is to be used to support or confirm any theological assertion. In this context, then, when al-Aš'arî simply sets aside a particular verse as not pertinent to the argument and apparently would seem thereby to avoid the point at issue, he is not dodging the question at all but following what was in reality a valid procedure, well established by his predecessors.

In the first instance (§ 108) his mu'tazilî opponent cites 3.72/78, which he will take as meaning that since the falsification of the revelation is "not from God", God did not create the acts whereby the Jews make false statements about the scriptures. The structure of the creation of human acts al-Aš'arî has already dealt with, so that here he simply says that the verse means that God did not reveal what they claim (cf. also § 99). There is here no problem of *qudra*. Al-Aš'arî will however, though having disposed of the verse as the basis of the argument, take up the intended force of the objection in § 114. Much the same technique is followed in the following paragraphs (§§ 109-115), all of which deal with the mu'tazilite argument that we cannot say that God creates and so is responsible for any thing which is vain or evil *(bâṭil)* and so form a fairly cohesive unit.

Thus in § 109 he says that *Koran* 67.3 f, which the *qadarîya* used as a proof text to show that God does not create unbelief, makes no reference to unbelief or any other kind of human act, since in its context it refers properly to the creation of the heavens (though he notes further that their use of the text, regardless of the context, can have no validity as the basis of the argument). So also he says (§ 110) that they have misinterpreted 32.7/6 which refers not to the goodness of what God creates but to the perfection of His own action and knowledge (1).

In §§ 111-5 then (which the text designates as a single *quaestio*), having set aside the " objections" raised, he takes up anew the problem mentioned in regard to the verses cited in the foregoing paragraphs, in terms of the universality of God's creation, begining with an objection raised on the basis of 38. 26/27 ("We did not create the heavens and the earth and what

(1) For the mu'tazilite use of the verse, cf. 'Abd al-Ğabbâr, *op. cit.*, 357f, where al-Aš'arî's interpretation of it is challenged on philological grounds.

is between them *bâṭilan*"). Stating first that their understanding of the sense of the verse is not valid in its proper context, since it refers properly to God's creation of punishments and rewards in the next life (§ 111), he returns (§ 112) to the distinctions set out above (§§ 103-7) regarding the application of the term *bâṭil* to God's creation and, to confirm the universality of creation (§ 113), cites 25.60/59: "He created the Heavens and the Earth and what is between them in six days". This would, he insists, have to be taken into consideration if one would read 38.26/27 as his opponents interpret it (i.e., as refering primarily to His creation of the world and the things in the world). Returning then (§ 114) to 3.72/78 (cited above in § 108) and the argument about God's creating what is *bâṭil*, he notes that if you will allow the opponent's objection and interpretation of that verse, reading it conjointly with 67.3f (taken up in § 109), you will have to allow that He does create acts of obedience *(ṭâ'âl)*; but this only raises anew the problem of God's justice and the determination of acts (cf. also § 121). Thus one is forced, he says, to allow his own interpretation of 32.7/6 (v. *supra* § 110), just as one does with 13.16/17 ("The Creator of everything"), which is explicitly universal.

Finally (§ 115), to make an end of these arguments based on a casuistry of the term *bâṭil*, he places alongside this last citation, that of 15.85: "We have not created the Heavens and the Earth and what is between them save with Truth" *(bil-ḥaqq)*. His interpretation of this, which must have been well established in conservative circles, since it is given also by Ibn Ḥanbal (1), is that *al-ḥaqq* here refers to God's command "be", through which all things come to exist. The Truth *(ḥaqq)* of all Being—of every being in Being—resides in the act whereby God creates it; the truth and rightness *(ḥaqq)* of the whole order of creation is grounded in the act of the Creator.

This section of the discussion is closed then with an argument (§ 116) which, although formally based on no more than the

(1) Cf. *Radd 'alà l-ǧahmîya (Ilahiyat Fakültesi Mecmuasi,* 1927), 321; it may be that the term *ḥaqq* has, in such usage, retained something of the sense of Hebrew *ḥuqqâ*. At any rate, al-Aš'arî's interpretation of this verse conforms exactly to his treatment of 32.7/6, cited above in § 110.

evidence of two common koranic phrases, is central to al-Aš'arî's understanding of the structure of God's omnipotence and the universality of His creation. The form of the argument, abbreviated as it is to the citation of two texts of the *Koran*, so as to give the appearance of a purely "traditionalist" type of argument from authority, should not obscure the profoundly philosophical character of its theoretical basis. Al-Aš'arî cites first the frequent expression that God "knows all things" *(bi-kulli šay'in 'alîm)*. According to the long established usage of the term *šay'* (thing) this will mean in the technical language of the kalâm that He knows each and every *being* (1). Then in view of the universality of this statement, he goes on to say that one will have to read the same universality in the likewise frequent koranic affirmation that God is "powerful over all things", i.e., that his power of action and efficient causality extends to all beings. As was suggested above, there is for al-Aš'arî a necessary and inevitable connection between knowledge and efficient causality: the determination of the Being of any being follows from the knowing intention of the causal agent, being first and essentially determined in the knowledge of the agent. Since therefore God alone knows exhaustively the fullness of the Being of all beings (cf. *supra*, §§ 85-87) we must take the statement that His power of causation extends to all beings to mean that there is no being which is brought into Being save that God is ultimately the true agent and creator who causes its being *(muḥdiṯun lahu, fâ'ilun, ḫâliq)*. In short, while there can be no doubt that secondary causes play their rôles in the events of the world, both human and natural, the fulness of the essential reality of all beings, separately and within the universal order of creation, is determined by and in the knowledge and intention of God, Who is the first and ultimate source of all Being (2). We need not further insist here upon the neoplatonic character of this conception nor its parallels in later Islamic thought.

(1) The sense is clearly established and commonly taken in this meaning already in the work of Ğahm b. Ṣafwân.

(2) In taking up this argument, 'Abd al-Ğabbâr (*op. cit.*, 375 and 377) refuses to allow the connection which al-Aš'arî and his followers find between the knowledge of the agent and his causality and treats it as if they would simply conclude from the universality of the first statement to that of the second. Regarding al-Aš'arî's argument here, cf. also *Maqâlât* 550, ll. 4-6.

The following paragraphs (§§ 117f) contain an "objection" based upon the sense of the term *barî'* (to be free of, have nothing to do with) as it occurs in *Koran* 9.3f: "God, indeed, and His Apostle have naught to do with the idolators". As the author points out, the immediate reference of the verse is to the invalidation of such covenants as exist with them, so that the verse is not really pertinent to the discussion of *qudra.* As used by the "objector" however, the verse is taken in isolation and the term *barî'* read in the sense that God is free of any relationship of responsibility to the acts of the idolators, whence it is argued that He did not create their acts. Having then pointed out the proper meaning of the verse in context, al-Aš'arî goes on, as he does above in regard to 3.72/78 (§§ 108 and 114) to take up (§ 118) the sense of the objection despite the non-cogency of the verse, and to raise the same difficulty as with 3.72/78 in § 114, viz., that if God does not create the idolatry of the idolators but nevertheless does create the belief of the believer, the question of His justice is in no way solved (1). For his own resolution of the difficulty he cites again the distinction made above regarding the creation of an act as belonging to another. Although these paragraphs (§§ 117-8) would seem to be possibly more in place between § 115 and § 116, it may be that the objection based on 9.3f is taken up as a kind of final shot, on the basis of the term *barî'*.

In § 119 we find the author's final case in which he will show that although God is the unique Creator and ground of all Being, He is transcendent and so not involved in the events of the world in such a way that He can be spoken of as the immediate responsible agent of an act. The example is carefully set so that, from the standpoint of the objector (al-Ğubbâ'î?) either al-Aš'arî will have to admit of a true spontaneity of self-determination, to be explained in terms of the subject alone,

(1) Involved here is an argument based on the fact that the Mu'tazila did evidently allow that He should be praised on account of the faith of the believer (cf. 'Abd al-Ğabbâr, *op. cit.*, 332f), though al-Aš'arî polemically distorts their intention. It should be noted that we must assume that this verse was important in the polemics of the Mu'tazila whom al-Aš'arî knew (cf. *infra ad* § 126), even though it would seem not to have been so used by the later followers of the school, probably because its adaptation was so obviously far removed from the proper context.

or that God's action excludes all existential spontaneity, with all the problems which follow from such a position. Two twins live alone in the desert (and so are free of outside suggestion and the pressure of the social group), one of whom comes to believe that God is one and the other that He is three. The problem then is set in two questions: is what God "put into the heart of the first man true?" Then: did He tell him the truth in what he put into his heart? The questions are then repeated *mutatis mutandis* regarding the second man.

The second question is purely polemical and the author disposes of it immediately as such. God's truthfulness and integrity *(ṣidq)* are not involved since we have not here to do with what is in any true sense a communication or inspiration of His own word. God's *ṣidq* is a divine attribute, His Word, and so cannot be predicated in any way of what is a purely human conception (an accident inhering in a material substrate or creature). In reply to the first question then, he returns to the distinctions made above: "it does not follow that He lies when He creates the act of lying belonging to another and lying in the heart of another, just as also it is not necessary that when He creates the act of efficient causality in another or the act of willing in another or movement in another that He be the immediate efficient agent [*qâdir*] or that He be thereby willing or moved". Here again, adhering strictly to his central problem and avoiding any description of the process, and any question of the existential spontaneity of the human act, he insists that the events belong properly to the men involved, as taking place through and in terms of their attributes and actions; albeit these are in every respect created, they belong as created to the human individual and it is from him, as belonging to him, that the event takes place. Al-Aš'arî refuses to be drawn onto his opponents ground and take up the question of the contingent spontaneity of the human act, just as his opponents generally refuse to remove the discussion from the context of freedom and justice onto the plain of a purely metaphysical analysis.

In the final paragraphs of the section on *qadar* (§§ 120f), where he defines the term *qadarîya*, al-Aš'arî makes his position clear in its contradistinction to that of al-Ğubbâ'î and to that of the

muǧabbira. Here again, as throughout the work his position gives the impression of being far more radical than it in fact is. The *qadarî* is, he says (§ 120), he who claims to be the complete agent of his acts, as they are determined immediately through his own causality *(muqaddaratan lahu)*, in exclusion of the causality of God, and thinks that God has no part whatsoever in the acts which he (the human agent) performs (cf. § 90). In contrast, the position of the *muǧabbira* (who are not named), which he also rejects (§ 121), is that God is the agent of all his acts as determined immediately through His own causality (without any intervention of the created agent). His own position is intermediate: "God determines our acts and creates them as they are determined immediately through our causality". We must beware, however, of reading "God determines our acts" in a deterministic sense. Al-Aš'arî will no more allow an absolute determinism (no matter how hidden under whatever rhetorical screen) than will Ibn Taymîya, Rather, as the essential content of the Being of all beings is determined through God's knowledge and intention, and as He is the source of all Being, "God is more strictly the cause of that of which we are the immediate cause, since it is through His causality that we are causes (§ 95)". His position is analogous to that of St. Thomas who says that *omnis causa secunda dans esse, hoc habet in quantum agit in virtute primae causae creantis* (*de Potentia*, 3.8 *ad* 19).

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HUMAN CAUSALITY CONSIDERED AS THE ACTUALITY OF THE AGENT

Throughout this section it must be kept in mind that al-Aš'arî understands *istiṭâ'a* or man's created *qudra* as the actuality of his power of causation, i.e., the «accident» *('araḍ)* which defines the actuality of the being of the agent insofar as he is the agent of the particular act, and has thereby departed from the common understanding of the term as it was used by his master Abû 'Alî and most of the Mu'tazila. This is purely a matter of definition and as such is not debatable. The question of the spontaneity of human action and those functions within the overall structure of the human act as

are covered by the term *qudra/istiṭâ'a* as it is used by various mu'tazilî authors and which al-Aš'arî eliminates from it, he will have to take care of in some other way, if and when he might choose to take up the more general problem. Since he does not do this in the *Luma'* however, it need be of no concern to the present investigation.

In the present section al-Aš'arî is not so much arguing to prove a point against the Mu'tazila as he is trying to elucidate and describe the structure of human causality in terms of his conception of *iktisâb* and *qudra muḥdaṯa*. Most of the propositions which he sets forth follow almost directly from his definition of created causality and his chief effort therefore is to clarify and to validate the detail of his understanding on the basis of the theses which were enunciated in the preceding section and the definition of created *qudra* which he will set forth in the paragraphs which immediately follow. In regard to these initial paragraphs it is to be noted that what the author is doing is no more than fixing the definition of the term *qudra/istiṭâ'a*. From one standpoint the definition might be quite briefly stated as the actuality of the agent insofar as he is the cause of his act. Al-Aš'arî however does not give any such concise definition, with what brief elaboration would be necessary to allow the grounding of his later theses. From one standpoint the purely literary or stylistic conventions which impose themselves upon him have certainly a considerable part in determining the way in which his thought is set out. More importantly however, as a determinent factor in the way he sets about defining his meaning, is the fact that the correlated concepts of actuality and potentiality, act and potency (which were unquestionably known to him) are deliberately excluded from the system and so from any discussion of the problem, as has been noted above. Since these concepts are not considered to have any ontological validity, the author must then perforce delimit his meaning of the term *qudra/istiṭâ'a* in a dialectic in which the sense of the definition, its inclusions and exclusions, are made manifest through an argumentation which assumes the understanding of the definition, against the meanings which it excludes.

It is also interesting to note that al-Aš'arî does not here,

as at the beginning of the other major sections of the work, state his position initially on the authority of a text of the *Koran*, though he does later, after he has elaborated his thesis (§§ 133f), cite several texts to confirm what he has said. So highly technical and abstract a conception could hardly be indicated or suggested by the revelation. That the structure of the act of *qudra* could not be demonstrated from revelation *(bis-sam')* was probably a doctrine of the school of al-Ğubbâ'î (1). Again, it is notable that when the author does come to the point of citing several texts to support his position, by showing that it conforms with the usage of the *Koran* their cogency is quite tenuous.

In the first paragraphs (§ 122 and §§ 123-5) al-Aš'arî defines his understanding of human *qudra* against and in contrast to that of the Mu'tazila. Against the position of an-Naẓẓâm and 'Alî al-Aswârî (2) he says (§ 122) that *qudra* is not an essential and inevitable determinent of the Being of man as such. This follows immediately from the assumed definition of the term, since the human individual is not at every moment of his existence the consciously intentional and willing agent of every act which defines his Being at the moment. Rather, his actuality as the cause of a particular event is, like a particular act of knowing, an accident of his Being.

In §§ 123-4 then, against the position of the great majority of the Mu'tazila, he says that the act of *qudra* exists simultaneously with the realisation of the act; it is «with the act and of the act». Though the question is set out (§ 123) as to whether it can precede the act or not, the author does not take up the problem first from this direction, in view of the fact that, considered as the actuality of the being of the agent insofar as he is the cause of the act, *qudra* cannot possibly precede the realisation of the act. This assumption is made quite clear later in § 125 where a part of the argumentation

(1) Cf. 'Abd al-Ğabbâr, *op. cit.*, 401.

(2) Cf. *Maqâlât*, 229; al-Aš'arî does not take up the real sense of an-Naẓẓâm's understanding of the notion of *qudra*, which in the full context of his system differs radically from that of most of the mutakallimîn.

is based on the thesis that the act of *qudra* cannot be already present in existence at the moment it comes to be *(bâqiyatun fî ḥâli ḥudûṯihâ)*. The question here is one of definition. The act of *qudra*, he says therefore (§ 123), must either be simultaneous with the realisation of the event or follow it, and clearly it cannot follow since this would entail the existence of a result prior to the actuality of its cause. As a kind of lemma to §§ 123f then, he argues in § 125 that the causality of the human agent cannot perdure in existence. The thesis of the majority of the Mu'tazila that *qudra* precedes the realisation of the act is eliminated because, within the limits of al-Aš'arî's definition of the term, this would mean that a being should precede the actuality of its own being, i.e., that the actuality of the cause, insofar as it is the cause of a particular being, should exist *per se* prior to the existence of that of which it is the cause or that an «accident» should inhere in an «accident».

In §§ 126-7 then, he goes on to insist that the single act of *qudra* can be the causality of only a single event. He takes up first (§ 126) the common Mu'tazilite thesis that the single act of *qudra* extends to both of a pair of contraries (i.e., that it is the power to perform the act or not to perform it). This thesis was, in effect, formally excluded in the previous paragraphs, in that it demands that the actuality of the *qudra* precede the realisation of the act or, by al-Aš'arî's definition of the term, would necessitate the simultaneous existence of a pair of contraries in the same subject (this last proposition being noted briefly at the end of § 126). Where all this might easily have been said in the foregoing paragraphs, however, he uses § 126 in order further to contrast the nature of human causality to that of God. It is this which justifies the presence of a distinct question here, as he continues delimiting his understanding of human *qudra* which, though the same term is used, is of altogether a different order; God's *qudra*, an attribute of His transcendent Being, is perpetually in act and can have no temporal relationship to the existence of its object *(maqdûr)*, whose existence is defined by the temporal and spatial dimensions of the material world. Al-Aš'arî says therefore that the actuality of God's eternal power is not such

that it necessitates the simultaneous actuality of its objects. To say this, in any sense whatsoever, would imply that things *(ašyâ')*, beings other than God, had some transcendent mode of being, and this he will allow under no circumstances. No being is immaterial *(lâ fî maḥall)* or is in any way eternal *(qadîm)* (1) other than God Himself. Thus also is the case with God's knowing *('ilm)* which, as was remarked, is closely associated in a quite platonic way with His causality; albeit God knows, in an eternal act of knowing, all beings and their place in the universal order of being, one cannot say, according to al-Aš'arî, that they pre-exist and have Being in His knowing, for the only Being which creatures have consists in the actuality of their material presence in the world (2). In contrast to the neoplatonists, al-Aš'arî denies categorically that the world or any of the beings which exist in the world in any way share or participate in any kind of immaterial and eternal existence. God's *qudra*, like His knowing, is altogether transcendent from the existence of material beings. From the standpoint of their coming into existence in the finite, temporal sequence of material events we can however say that God's *qudra* precedes the realisation of its objects. Human causality on the other hand, which is the causality of a cause whose Being is in every respect a material Being, can exist only in an immediate and simultaneous, temporal correlation to its effect.

In reply to the question of whether from a single act of *qudra* there can result two similar effects, he mentions (§ 127) for the first time explicitly that, most strictly understood, the act of causation co-exists with its effect not merely in time but also in the same subject *(maḥall/mawḍû')* (3), and

(1) The sense of the term *qadîm* (already well developed as a central concept in the theology of al-Ğubbâ'î) would seem, as used by al-Aš'arî in the *Luma'*, to contain some important analogies to the sense of the term *al-wâğib bi-ḏâtihi* (the necessary *per se*) as used by Avicenna and the philosophers; cf. *Luma'*, § 6 and § 36 and also al-Baqillânî, *at-Tamhîd* (ed. M. el-Khodeiri and M. Abû Rîda, Cairo, 1366/1947), 49 and on the use by al-Ğubbâ'î and the Mu'tazila cf. *Maqâlât*, 529, 'Abd al-Ğabbâr, *al-Muġnî*, pt. 4 (ed. M. Hilmî and A. al-Ghanîmî, Cairo, ND) 250f and Šahrastânî, *Milal*, 125.

(2) Cf. *supra* and *Šarḥ al-Mawâqif* 2, 127 and 152, *et alibi*.

(3) The opposition of human causality in its relation to its effect and God's in

then denies the possibility that more than one effect follow a single act of *qudra*, saying that if there were more than one, they will either have to take place successively, in which case one of them will be an effect which does not co-exist with its immediate cause (and so be the result of a non-existent causality) or they will have to exist simultaneously, as two distinct effects and this, in turn, will involve the simultaneous existence of contraries in a single substrate. This paragraph, succinct and modest at it is, is quite important in making explicit several aspects of al-Aš'arī's understanding of the structure of created causality, which are central to his whole conception of the general problem and to his reduction of it to its minimum terms.

To end the first division of this section, confirming what has gone before, he remarks briefly (§ 128) that man's power of efficient causality (here *istiṭâ'a)* is so related to the act resulting from it that it can only exist simultaneously with the act as the immediate causation thereof. Where, in the discussion which preceded, the problem was approached almost exclusively from the analysis of the notion of *qudra*, this last additional evidence he raises from the consideration of the act, which, as it depends upon the actual causation of the agent, cannot be separated from it. More importantly perhaps from the standpoint of the author, he here brings up for the first time in this section, i.e., since § 121) the creation of the human act by God and makes clear the point that the act which is realised through the causality of the human agent takes place simultaneously with God's creation of the agent's power of causation. The effect then of the paragraphs is to tie the present discussion (§§ 122ff) together with the matters discussed in the previous section. Also it is to be noted that here (§ 128) he uses the term *kasb/iktisâb* for the first time in this section. This is important to the proper understanding of the meaning of these terms as al-Aš'arî uses them. Where in §§ 122-127 the discussion of the relationship between man's causality and his act was carried out in isolation from that of God's

relation to what He creates, has been dealt with above (§§ 85f) so that the author feels no need to take it up again here.

creation of man's causality, the only terms used were *qudra* and *istiṭâ'a; kasb* is brought up only here in § 128 when the question of God's transcendent causality is introduced. It is therefore quite clear that the term, most strictly understood, implies the acquisition of the act through God's creation of the act of causation in the agent. This does not, it should again be noted, vitiate the notion that the human agent is the cause. On the contrary, it is evident from §§ 122-127 that human causality can be discussed in and of itself within its own order of being. The introduction of the question of God's creation of human causality and the «acquisition» of the act by the human agent sets the problem within the fuller context, against the framework of another dimension and order of Being and relates the Being of the act which is entirely within the world to the ground of its Being which is world-transcendent.

The use of *kasb* in the previous section—especially, for example in § 116—as defining the relation of the created agent to his act, follows from an extension of its basic meaning (as in § 128) to cover the realisation of the human act in all its dimensions: the relationship between the agent (as moved mover) and his act, as well as his relationship as an agent to the ground of his Being as agent. *Kasb* thus becomes a term for the relationship between the agent and his act as an extension of the primary designation of the createdness of his efficient causality and remains distinct from *qudra/istiṭâ'a* in that these terms denote his efficient causality as such (cf. *supra ad* §§ 92f). Although the single term, *qudra* is used both of God's causality and of man's, the two are not understood as analogous in any way.

In the following paragraphs (§§ 129-132) the author takes up the relation of the causation of the act to those elements and qualities of the Being of the agent without which no act is possible. It is clear enough that from the author's standpoint the closer delimitation of the central problem, which he makes at the outset, is sufficient to cover each of the several items discussed, but given the more general context of the structure of human existence as it was understood, analysed, and discussed

by the mutakallimîn, he was constrained to take up each factor as a separate question in order to make his meaning unequivocally clear in respect of each.

The first question (§ 129) is that of the relationship between the act which takes place and the member of the body *(ğâriḥa)* which is its instrument and locus. There is no question at all of the thesis of some of the Mu'tazila, cited above, that *qudra* consists in the strength and physical well-being of the body, but rather the intention of the author is further to refine and delimit the question of created causality by removing from the discussion all extraneous elements. From the point of view of al-Aš'arî's ontology, the distinctions made here and in the following paragraphs are most important, as again we witness another step in the reduction of the problem to the most basic terms, which characterise its treatment in the later kalâm.

He notes thus that with the absence (in whatever sense) of the efficient member, there can be no act, for the reason that there can be no efficient causality in the absence of the instrument through which and in which the event must be realised. Most strictly speaking, the impossibility of the act is not due immediately to the absence of the efficient member but rather to the absence of the act of efficient causality *(qudra)*, which is the immediate ontological ground of its realisation; that is, the absence of the efficient member may, in the particular case, be the immediate circumstance of the impossibility of the presence of the act of causation, but ontologically the non-realisation of the act is due to the non-actuality of the cause as cause: the non-presence *('adam)* of the act of causation in the cause.

In regard to the relationship between the realisation of the act and the presence of the «accident» of life in the agent, al-Aš'arî makes the same distinction (§ 130) as in the preceding paragraph. This is taken up as a separate question because life was held by most of the mutakallimîn, including al-Aš'arî, to be the condition of the presence in the living being of those attributes associated with it (knowing, willing, perceiving, etc.) and so also of the possibility of the existence of *qudra*. Ontolo-

gically, the non-realisation of the act is due immediately to the absence of the causality from which it should have taken place, not to the absence of life as such, even though this necessarily excludes the possibility of the presence of the act of causation. Here again he is not, I think, trying to make a point against the position, such as that of Abû l-Hudhayl, that the realisation of the act can take place in the absence of life (since according to him, the power of causality from which the act proceeds precedes its realisation and does not perdure into the moment of its realisation); this question was adequately dealt with above. Rather, as in the previous paragraph, his intention is to elucidate further the structure of the act of causality and the event in the context of the being of the agent.

Such also is the case in § 131; within the strict limits of the notion of human causality as understood by the kalâm, the agent is the cause of the act only insofar as he knows and freely intends it, wherefore there can be no act, as the true act of the particular agent, in the absence of such knowledge and skill *(iḥsân)* as are prerequisite to it. Al-Aš'arî notes that the realisation of the act is immediately dependent upon the act of causation, not the presence of the prerequisite knowledge or skill, even though the latter constitute a precondition of the possibility of the act.

In § 132 then he summarises the position which he has set forth in the previous three paragraphs, saying that the absence of any internal or external constraint or impediment to the freedom of action (1) is the necessary condition of the realisation of the act. So also the physical organism, as a unified, organic whole, in being the substrate of both the *qudra* and the resulting act, forms a necessary condition of the possibility of the act (2).

(1) For the meaning of the terms *taḫliya* and *iṭlâq* cf. 'Abd al-Ğabbâr, *Šarḥ al-uṣûl*, 404 and 393; the former I take to refer to the absence of any constraint to or restraint from the performance of the act (cf. the use of the expression *al-qâdir al-muḫallà* in *al-Muġnî*, pt. 6, 1 [ed. A. el-Ahwani and I. Madkur, Cairo 1382/1962] 18 and 26) but not specifically to an external hindrance to its performance, this being covered by the term *iṭlâq* (cf. the addition of the reference to *al-mâni'*, *ibid.*, 18) though perhaps no fine distinction was made between the two.

(2) Al-Ğubbâ'î used the term *binya*, which al-Aš'arî employs here, as a technical

Accepting the formula of al-Ğubbâ'î but taking it within the framework of his own understanding of *qudra* (as in act at the moment of the realisation of the action), al-Aš'arî allows that the actual realisation of the act is concommitant with «the organism's bearing the act» *(wuǧûdu ḥtimâli l-binyati liš-šay')* since «the organism is the subject only of that which subsists in it». Allowing this however, he notes that in both cases, as in the instances mentioned above (§§ 129-31), the immediate ontological ground of the act in the agent is the actuality of the power of efficient causality, not the condition of its actuality.

Having then completed the outline of his basic position on the question. he proceeds to cite several passages of the *Koran* as proof-texts in support of his thesis of the simultaneity of the act of *qudra* and the realisation of the event. The texts (18.66/67 in § 133 and 11.22/20 and 18.101 in § 134) do in fact little more than give some justification for his use of the terms. That their support of his argument is weak (in that they all involve negative statements) the author would seem to be aware, in that he introduces them here, after his meaning is fully established, rather than at the outset of the section.

The question of absolute incapacity *('aǧz)* is first introduced (§ 135) in terms of the classical problem of God's imposing upon a person an obligation to that of which he is incapable *(taklîf mâ lâ yuṭâq)* (1). In both this and the following paragraphs, al-Aš'arî's aim is primarily to make clear several important distinctions regarding the terms. He has already mentioned in the preceding paragraph the principle that the act of leaving an action unperformed *(tarkuhu)* constitutes the realisation of its contrary. This is a matter of perspective, *scil.*, of which act is taken as the point of departure, since whichever act is realised in the agent defines the actuality of his being at the moment. On the basis of this principle

term for the human body in its unity as an organism which, in its structure as such, forms the condition of the presence of life and so of all other attributes for whose presence life is itself the condition (cf. *Milal*, 120); note however, that they did not identify *qudra* and the soundness or physical well-being of the body *(ibid.)*. Cf. also *muġnî* 4, 333.

(1) On this question generally cf. Brunschvig, *op. cit.* (where al-Aš'arî's treatment of the problem is discussed pp. 18ff).

therefore, and of the understanding of *qudra* already established, his first reply to the question of whether the unbeliever is capable *(mustaṭî')* of faith is clear enough: since *qudra/istiṭâ'a* defines the actuality of the agent in his being the cause of the particular act, it cannot, within the limits of the terms be said that the human agent has *qudra* or is *mustaṭî'* of the contrary of the act which defines his Being at the moment. The actuality of unbelief in the unbeliever excludes the possibility of the simultaneous actuality of belief in him. In this sense then, al-Aš'arî allows that the unbeliever can be said to be «incapable of belief» *('âğiz 'anhu)*, while at the same time God imposes the obligation of belief upon him. This is not in any sense however to say that it is impossible that he become believing at another moment.

To say however, that the unbeliever is incapable of belief involves what for al-Aš'arî is strictly an improper use of the term «incapability». According to the limitation of the term which he set forth earlier, the contrary of an act can only be properly predicated of one for whom the act is intrinsically possible, so that for example, what is immovable or absolutely incapable of movement cannot properly be said to be at rest *(sâkin)* nor can one who is totally incapable of speaking be properly described as «non-speaking» (*ğayru mutakallim*- § 43). Thus the «incapacity *('aǧz)* of the one who is absolutely incapable of the act cannot be due to the actuality in him of the presence of the contrary» *(istaḥâla an ya'ǧuza l-'âǧizu 'ani š-šay'i li-ṭarkihi lahu*—§ 136).

As opposed to *qudra*, which is the act of efficient causality of the free agent who is in the full sense morally responsible for the realisation of the act, *'aǧz* denotes the total absence of such causality. It is therefore, as he noted earlier (§ 38), the contrary of *qudra : 'aǧz* is the absolute absence of all causality (understanding causality strictly within the limits of *qudra/istiṭâ'a* as defined). Consequently where *qudra*, in the human agent, implies a prior freedom of conscious and deliberative choice and in a sense the prior possibility of the realisation of the contrary (1), *'aǧz* implies the absence or impossibility

(1) Although al-Aš'arî does not allow *qudra* or any other term in the sense

of any such deliberate determination on the part of such an agent. Consequently, whereas the human agent is morally responsible for the realisation of the act which is realised through his created *qudra* and thereby is also responsible for the non-realisation of its contrary (cf. also § 146), *'aǧz* denotes the total absence of responsibility (as the absence of any bond of efficient causality), both for the act whose actuality defines the present being of the subject and concomitantly for the non-realisation *(tark)* of its contrary, in that its presence excludes the existence, in the agent, of the conditions of his free and deliberate performance of the act. *'Aǧz*, in other words, as the absence of any relationship of efficient causality (*'adamu l-qudrati kullihâ*—§ 137) between the subject and the act, directly implies the absence of any relationship of causal responsability between the agent and the type or class *(ǧins)* of the act involved; as the absence of all true efficient causality, *'aǧz* is the absence of the possibility of all causal responsability of the subject to both the posited act and its contrary. In this way then, *'aǧz* is not analogous to (*qiyâsan 'alâ*—§ 136) *qudra*, since the latter represents the actuality, in the agent, of the efficient causality of the act and, in the strictest sense, is relative therefore only to the act of which it is the causality. It is this lack of analogous reciprocity between *qudra* and *'aǧz* which the author details in § 136, insisting that *'aǧz* is, for this reason, not of the same class *(ǧins)* as *qudra*.

As was mentioned however, he does say in § 38 that *'aǧz* is the contrary *(yuḍâddu)* of *qudra* and this should, if consistent with the normal usage of the kalâm, imply a complete analogy between them. This inconsistency became later the subject of some disagreement and is discussed in detail in the *Šarḥ al-Mawâqif* (1). There the authors say that al-Aš'arî held two positions regarding *'aǧz:* the first (and more valid of the

of the potentiality to perform the act nor, as we mentioned above, allow strictly of any potentiality as an indetermination within the Being of the agent, he does quite clearly assume (cf. e. g., § 137) a prior possibility of the realisation of either the act or its contrary. In what terms he discussed this question, however, we cannot tell, since it is not treated formally in any of the sources.

(1) *Šarḥ al-Mawâqif*, 6, 107f.

two according to al-Ğurğânî) is that *'aǧz* is the strict contrary of *qudra*, wherefore it is related only to the real, present act *(al-fi'l al-mawǧûd)*, which defines the actuality of the subject, so that strictly we should say only that the palsied person is «incapable of his present act of sitting» *(al-qu'ûd al-mawǧûd)*. That is, within the technical formulae which we have been using, we should say that he has no true relationship of efficient causality to his present act; but we may not, within the strict sense of the terms, say that he is «incapable of the non-existent act of standing». According to this use, *'aǧz* defines only the present actuality of the subject in relation to a particular present act of his Being, «without any allusion whatsoever» to the contrary which is non-existent in the actual Being of the subject. The second position, which al-Îǧî regards as weak, is, he says, that «*aǧz* is relative only to the non-present act», i.e., that of which, in the common, non-technical use of the words, we say that the person is incapable *('âǧiz)*. This position, which he says is followed by a number of Aš'arites, is that of the Mu'tazila. The authors go on then to say that from this position is derived the thesis that *'aǧz* extends to both of a pair of contraries, even though *qudra* does not, since *'aǧz*, in contrast to *qudra*, involves what is not actually present in Being *(al-ma'dûm)*. Since, however, the union of contraries is only possible in what is not actually present in Being, the thesis that *'aǧz* is relative to both of a pair of contraries demands that the actuality of the act of *'aǧz* precede the realisation in the person of the act of which he is incapable *(al-ma'ǧûz 'anhu)*. That is, the act of *'aǧz* is the impossibility in the subject that he realise through his own efficient causality either of a pair of contraries and as such exists in him prior to the realisation in him of one of the pair as a «necessary act» *(fi'l iḍṭirâr)* through an efficient causality other than his own.

Though the first position described by the author of the *Šarḥ al-Mawâqif* would certainly seem to be implied by al-Aš'arî when he says that *'aǧz* is the contrary of *qudra*, since it would be fully consistent with his understanding of the formal structure of *qudra/isṭiṭâ'a*, the second position described would seem to bear little relationship to anything in the *Luma'*,

for in it al-Aš'arî expresses quite a different position and says neither that *'aǧz* is relative *only* to the contrary which is not realised in the subject, nor that it precedes the realisation of the act to which it is primarily relative. It is possible, perhaps, that al-Ğurğânî misunderstood al-Aš'arî's meaning and went on to elaborate the matter of the priority of *'aǧz* to the *ma'ǧûz 'anhu* following the formulation and doctrine of those who did hold such a position. For al-Aš'arî, whereas *qudra* denotes the positive and actual causality of the act which the agent realises in himself and connotes therefore also his moral responsibility for his act, it involves the contrary only insofar as the realisation of the act can be regarded as the non-realisation of its contrary. *'Aǧz* on the other hand, as the complete negation of any relationship of efficient causality between the subject and the act which is realised in him, implies correspondingly the total absence of any responsibility whatsoever for the non-realisation of the contrary. Since he does not set forth explicitly his reasons for taking the position stated in § 136, but rather assumes it and argues only to validate it, we cannot say with certainty what may have been the full reason for his apparently abandoning the position taken or at least impled in § 38. In part, no doubt, the denial that *qudra* and *'aǧz* are analogous and of the same class was important to his argument with al-Ğubbâ'î regarding the structure of *qudra* (1). Beyond this and more significantly perhaps, it is clear that al-Aš'arî had to take such a position in order to ground the initial statement of § 136 and that of § 135, viz., that *'aǧz* is not strictly applicable to the non-causality which exists between the agent and the contrary of the act of which he is properly the agent *(muktasib)*, so that consequently we may not say that the unbeliever is absolutely incapable *('âǧiz)* of belief, since the very fact of the realisation in him of the act of unbelief constitutes a positive relationship to the class *(ǧins)* constituted by the contraries belief/unbelief. This is in

(1) 'Abd al-Ğabbâr notes (*Šarḥ al-uṣûl al-ḫamsa*, 430) that his «masters» proved that *qudra* precedes the act through the analogy with *'aǧz*, whence al-Aš'arî's insistence on the fact that they are not analogous.

conformance with the position stated in § 43, in that neither of the pair of contraries is excluded in the sense of having been absolutely impossible *(mustaḥîl)* of realisation in him, but rather the one is excluded simply by the present actuality of the other. In trying to make his position clear regarding the structure of *'aǧz* he is brought by the traditional topology of the question to the necessity of describing at this point the difference between the relationships which exist on the one hand between the responsible agent and the non-realised contrary of the act which is present in him through his own causality and on the other, between the subject in which is realised an act that does not proceed from his own proper causality (the «necessary act») and the non-realised contrary of that act. The problem is to distinguish, within the terms of the system (i.e., within the limits imposed by the exclusion of any notion of prior potentiality within the subject) two types of impossibility and non-actuality as they qualify the actuality of the Being of the subject in its relationship to the non-realised contrary of its present actuality. This is crucial to the elucidation of the difference between the position of al-Aš'arî and that of his mu'tazilî opponents.

Since later (§ 139) he extends the range of the act of *'aǧz* to cover far more than the individual act and its contrary, it may well be that his statement in § 38 that *'aǧz* is contrary to *qudra* is not to be taken in the strict technical sense of contrariety as it is generally used in the kalâm. He does not explain it there nor is there any other text of al-Aš'arî himself which offers any light on the problem. At any rate the importance of the distinctions made in § 138 becomes quite obvious in the following paragraphs.

The question (§ 137) is then posed as to whether it is possible «that God impose an obligation to something in the absence of the efficient member and the concomitant impossibility of the act [*'aǧz*]». Any command, he replies, assumes perforce the possibility of its acceptence or rejection, and since the absence of the efficient member required to carry out the particular act commanded necessarily entails the absolute impossibility of the free acceptence or rejection of the command

(i.e., of the realisation of either the act commanded or its contrary), there can be no command. Further elaborating the distinction made in §§ 135f he notes that *'aǧz* taken as simply the impossibility of the act which is due to the presence of the contrary is not the same as the absolute exclusion of its possibility due to the total absence of any *qudra* relative to the particular act. The contrary belongs to the same class as the act but *'aǧz* in the strictest sense, such as that arising from the absence of the efficient member, involves the total exclusion of all *qudra* relative to the particular act; that is, it precludes the presence of all *qudra*—of any *qudra* whatsoever—both that which determines the present realisation of the act commanded as well as that of the present realisation of the contrary, since it excludes the possibility of the realisation of the class and, indeed, extends to all classes of acts which would require the presence of the particular member for their realisation through the proper causality of the agent (§ 139). So also (§ 138), as in the case with the absence of the efficient member, is that involved in any other type of physical impossibility: the command to *zakât* in relation to him who has no wealth, etc.

Further elaborating the extension of *'aǧz* to cover both the act and its contrary (§ 139), al-Aš'arî says that the act of absolute impossibility of action cannot be relative simply to a single, posited act, since this would involve an infinity of incapacities *(a'ǧâz)* in the subject. *'Aǧz* like all other «accidents» is a positive attribute of the being of the subject. It arises in terms of a particular structure in the subject and involves all classes of action whose possibility or realisation through his true efficient causality are excluded in terms of that structure. Death, whose presence as an «accident» within the subject excludes absolutely the possibility of all action, determines a single, structured act of incapacity relative to all acts.

There follows a series of *quaestiones*, based for the most part on disputed verses of the Koran, by which the Mu'tazila attempted to argue to the necessity of *qudra's* preceding the realisation of the act. Here, as throughout the sections

dealing with this problem, the author does not in most instances argue to demonstrate the basis of his teaching but rather, in those cases in which he allows any validity to the objection in terms of the particular verse as bearing on the question, he clarifies the understanding of the particular question within the framework established in the preceding paragraphs.

Thus in § 140 the objector would make his point by playing on the opposition between the everyday use of the verb *qadara* and the Mu'tazilite understanding of *qudra*, as opposed to the technical sense in which al-Aš'arî uses it: can a man be said to be «capable of» divorcing her who, at the moment of the divorce, is not his wife. Al-Aš'arî's reply is simply to insist upon the technical meaning of *qudra* as the agent's act of efficient causality at the moment of the realisation of the act.

The arguments of the remaining paragraphs add little to the understanding of what the author has already said and we can, consequently, deal with them quite briefly.

The arguments of §§ 141-3 are of some interest in that they illustrate quite clearly the importance which proof-texts held for al-Aš'arî and the consequent seriousness with which their interpretation—though it seems often to the modern reader a kind of tactical exercise in polemics and casuistry—was undertaken. The objection, to show that *qudra*/*istiṭâ'a* precedes the realisation of the act, is proposed on the basis of *Sûra* 2.180/184: «... obligatory upon those who are able to do it [i.e., to fast] is a redemption, the feeding of a poor man...» The verse was used by al-Ǧubbâ'î to show that *istiṭâ'a* precedes the act, since it refers to the capability of fasting at a time when the subject is not actually fasting (1). Al-Aš'arî is unwilling to accept the obvious meaning of the text precisely because the interpretation then would be unavoidable and because he is, in fact, too honest and consistent a theologian to try to escape from the dilemma, once having allowed the literal sense of the text, through some fakery of purely casuistic distinguos. Furthermore, any such distinction as would solve the dilemma would probably have to allow some kind

(1) Râzî, *Tafsîr*, 5, 89.

of prior potentiality in the *istiṭâ'at al-badan* (cf. § 144) and this also is excluded on principle. His only recourse then he takes, namely that of denying that the pronoun of *yuṭîqûnahu* refers to the antecedent «fasting»; he insists therefore that it anticipates the following «redemption» *(fidya)* and so refers to the actual presence of sufficient wealth belonging to the subject to allow the redemption. Philologically, his case is extremely weak, for though he tries to support himself by the citation of a number of other verses in which the pronoun does in fact refer to a following noun (§ 143), the disagreement of gender between the pronoun in question and the word to which al-Aš'arî would have it refer, renders his interpretation most unlikely.

In § 144, where there is no grammatical problem, he makes the same distinction in the mode of the *istiṭâ'a*. The objection is raised on the basis of 3.91/97 regarding the obligation to make the ritual pilgrimage to Mecca for him «who is able to make his way there»; and al-Aš'arî's reply is simply that the reference is to the availability of money and the means of transportation and not to the *qudra* or *istiṭâ'a* which exists as an inherent attribute of the subject *(istiṭâ'at al-badan)* and whose actual presence entails the actuality of the result. The same distinction is made in § 145 regarding the interpretation of 9.42 and in § 148 regarding 65.7.

In §§ 146 and 147 two citations are introduced which the author does consider pertinent to the question. The former («Fear God insofar as you are able»—64.16) is of some interest since his interpretation of it throws some light on the distinctions made in §§ 135f. Whereas the Mu'tazila had evidently understood the verse as supporting their thesis of man's complete posession of his own *qudra* and the consequent implication of its actuality before the act, al-Aš'arî remarks that the meaning is that if they are actually «capable» *(mustaṭî'în)* of fearing God (i.e., within the technical terminology of the system: are actually fearing God) then it is to this that they are obliged and that if they are *mustaṭî'în* of the contrary (i.e., are actually the contrary of fearing God) they are likewise obliged to fear God since «it is not obligatory upon them unless they are

capable of it or its contrary». That is, if they have a positive relationship of freely determined efficient causality to the class of the act involved, then they are subject to the command *('amr)* and to the obligation, under penalty of sin *(taklîf)*, since the impossibility *(istiḥâla)* of their performing the act is *de facto* excluded; there is no inherent impediment to their becoming godfearing (cf. *supra ad* § 132 and § 137 and *infra ad* § 149).

With this introduction then he persues the same problem in §§ 147-9, reviewing the opposition of *qudra* and *'aǧz* in the fuller context of the command *(amr)* and obligation *(taklîf)*. The question of *'aǧz* is introduced in terms of 58.5/4 («He who is unable to [fast]...») which the Mu'tazila evidently used to argue that *qudra* precedes the act on the basis of the analogy between *qudra* and *'aǧz*. Here al-Aš'arî simply insists upon his own technical understanding of *'aǧz*. Then in § 149 he returns to the distinctions set forth in §§ 135ff, in taking up the interpretation of 2.286: «God imposes no obligation upon a soul save according to its capacity». In treating this text he introduces for the first time the classical problem of Islamic moral thought concerning the unreflected impulse to action *(al-ḫâṭir*, pl. *ḫawâṭir)*, good or evil, a problem which we must assume formed a central question in the traditional topology of the interpretation of this verse in the school of al-Ǧubbâ'î (1). In reply he says that in regard to the content of his immediate and unreflected temptation or impulse to disobey God's commands, man is not obliged under penalty of sin so long as he does not follow the impulse and commit the sinful act, since the *ḫawâṭir* are not subject to his will and deliberate intention. God does not, he says, command his servants that of which they are absolutely incapable *('âǧizûn)*. Rather, the term capacity *(wus')* refers in this verse to those things over which God gives the human agent the actual power of efficient causality, subject to his own will and determination *(mâ yuṭîquhu 'alayhi)*. The meaning of this last phrase rests

(1) This can be, I feel, generally assumed in regard to all the verses which he introduces as «objections»; cf. for example al-Ǧubbâ'î's interpretation and use of 40.33 and 3.104, cited *infra ad* § 162.

upon the distinctions of §§ 135-7 and § 146; «that over which God has given him the actual power of efficient causality» includes thus the class *(ǧins)* of acts and consequently both the thing commanded and its contrary. If the agent, through his own free determination, is the actual cause of either, he is then subject to the law and under obligation to obey it because of his actual capacity to be the agent of acts falling within the class.

The following paragraphs (§§ 150-7) then treat of the problem of human causality in the context of the question of God's willing all that He creates and the fact that nothing exists which He has not willed. The general question of God's will and the dependence of all creation upon it was taken up separately in §§ 49ff, so that the effect of the discussion in the present section is simply to place the general understanding of created causality within the broader context of al-Aš'arî's theology. Here the question is first raised in §§ 150-2 in terms of *Koran* 27.39, where an *ifrît* says to Solomon, «I am strong enough to do it and can be trusted [to do it]». Though al-Aš'arî does not approve the exegetical principles upon which the Mu'tazila arrive at their conclusion concerning the significance of the statement (§ 151), he goes on to say (§ 152) that the assertion of the *ifrît* is invalid unless the intended meaning is that «I am strong enough and can be trusted to do it, if God wills». In following paragraphs then, he introduces four more texts to support his analysis and confirm that no event takes place— there is no act of efficient causality— unless God wills it. The discussion in these paragraphs is mostly polemical and adds little to the understanding of the structure of human causality as al-Aš'arî conceives it.

As a kind of appendix to the discussion of 27.39, because of the parallelism of wording and, no doubt, a similar use of the text by the Mu'tazila to show that *qudra* precedes the act of creation on God's part, in § 157 he analyses 28.26, according to which the daughters of Jethro speak of Moses as «strong and trustworthy» *(qawîyun amîn)*. Al-Ǧubbâ'î took this to mean that he was « capable of whatever work her father needed» (§ 157). In contrast to his treatment of 27.39, al-

Aš'arî says that this text can be used against his master to show that *istiṭâ'a* is, in fact, simultaneous with the realisation of the act since the girl's reference is to Moses' strength of body *(quwwa)* and trustworthiness *(amâna)* of which she was witness (1). So also, he goes on to say, we know that a man's efficient causality of prayer is actualised in him when we see him standing in prayer, even though we do not know the exact moment at which it came into being for him.

The final paragraphs (§§ 159-64) form a kind of summary of a number of the principal questions which he has taken up in regard to *qudra/istiṭâ'a*, in which confirmatory texts and interpretations are introduced with a minimum of explanation and exposition: § 159—the universality of God's creation of what He wills; § 160— misinterpretation of the *Koran* about the lies of the unbelievers concerning God's activity on the part of the Mu'tazila (cf. *supra ad* § 108 and § 117); § 161—*taklîf mâ lâ yuṭâq;* § 162—the creation of evil and injustice; § 163—the affirmation of man's genuine moral responsibility for his action against the *muǧabbira;* and § 164—God's solicitude for man's comfort and welfare.

Though these paragraphs shed no new light on al-Aš'arî's understanding of the problems involved, since in every case his reply to the objection consists in no more than the briefest allusion to the structure of causality already outlined, § 162 is nevertheless of interest in that we have some information on the background of the use of both the verses cited, as they were interpreted by the Mu'tazila and particularly by al-Aš'arî's master, al-Ǧubbâ'î, so that we can see something of the real complexity of argumentation which underlies the apparent simplicity and brevity of much of the *Luma'*. The first verse cited is 40.33/31: «God does not will injustice to human beings». According to the Mu'tazila, two theses can be demonstrated from this verse, first «that God does not will that some men wrong others and secondly that He does not will to wrong any human being. If He were to create unbelief *(kufr)* in them and then to punish them on the basis of this unbelief,

(1) For the story involved, cf. Ṭabarî, *Tafsîr* (Cairo, 1321), 29.36f.

He would be doing injustice. Consequently, since it is established that He does not will any wrongdoing at all, it is confirmed that He does not create human acts *(af'âl al-'ibâd)* since, if He created them, He would will them (1)». The interpretation of the second verse (3.104/108: «God does not will any injustice to the worlds») follows much the same lines as that of 40.33: «Al-Ğubbâ'î says that this verse shows that He does not will any [wrongdoing]. Were He the agent of any of the various kinds of wrongdoing, He would will it, and this is impossible. [The Mu'tazila] also say that one can verify on the basis of this verse that He is not the agent of wrongdoing nor the agent of the acts of human beings, and that He does not will the evils of human acts. ... They gleefully assert that this one verse is sufficient to confirm all the principles of the Mu'tazila which have to do with the question of God's justice (2).» In view of the significance of these verses for the polemics of the Mu'tazila, the fact that al-Aš'arî takes them up here at the end of the tract on the creation of human causality is noteworthy in respect of his organisation of the *Luma'*, for in summarising his own position he takes off, for the particular question, from a verse on the basis of which his opponents made a similar summary proof of their own position. Again, from a purely rhetorical standpoint, he takes up two central proof-texts of his opponents and in reply does nothing more than to rely upon a distinction which al-Ğubbâ'î and his school explicitly rejected, when he says that «the meaning of the texts is that He does not will that He wrong them, even if He does will that they wrong one another». The disdain embodied in the reply is remarkable in itself, though the sense of what he means is quite clear from the distinctions made in §§ 96ff, on account of which he feels no need to go further into the matter here. Basically the two systems—that of al-Ğubbâ'î and that of al-Aš'arî—are in fact so divided on a number of funda-

(1) Râzî, *Tafsîr*, 27.60; the citation of the Mu'tazila goes on to hold that one can also prove that God is nevertheless capable of doing injustice if He should will to do so, etc., but this is not pertinent to the present discussion of human causality; on the same verse, cf. also 'Abd al-Ğabbâr, *op. cit.*, 359f.

(2) Râzî, *Tafsîr*, 8. 186.

mental principles that there can be no dialogue between them; neither will allow the validity of the primary assumptions of the other. What al-Aš'arî means here is that the acts of wrongdoing can be said to be willed by God in that He has created the efficient causality for them in the human agents. He has however, created the act not as His own act but rather has created it «for another». The wrongdoing is immediately willed and performed by the human agent by whom it is realised through a causality which God has created for him at the moment of the realisation of the act. It is thus the human agent who wills to do wrong to another, to whom the act of injustice is properly imputed and it is he whose act it is, in that it is through his act of causation, which God has created for him, that the act is performed.

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SABÉENS ET IḪWĀN AL-ṢAFĀ'

(suite et fin)

MYSTÈRES GRECS OU MITHRIACISME ? (1)

Comme on le sait, tous les mystères de l'Hellade seraient venus d'Orient (bien que ceux d'Éleusis et de Samothrace soient très anciens), Phrygie, Lydie ou Thrace.

Au VII^e siècle, s'y serait ajoutée une influence égyptienne.

C'est alors que les Mystères d'Éleusis et de Samothrace auraient subi une transformation du fait de la fusion des cultes de Déméter et de Dionysos.

En outre, les orphiques auraient, à la même époque, identifié Osiris à Dionysos-Zagreus (originaire de Thrace) et, désormais, Dionysos et Déméter devaient être identifiés à Osiris et Isis.

Après la guerre du Péloponèse, les mystères se multiplient par l'adoption de mystères venant de Phrygie, d'Asie Mineure, de Syrie et d'Égypte : mystères de Sabazios, Attis et Cybèle, Aphrodite, Isis.

Sous l'empire romain, l'importance des mystères s'accroît encore, et les mystères de Mithra viennent s'y ajouter. Tous ces mystères, après s'être influencés, finissent par s'interpénétrer. A l'origine, déjà, les mystères symbolisaient la résurrection de l'âme ; mais, à cette époque, on y ajoute de nouvelles interprétations philosophiques et le néo-platonisme s'introduit même dans l'enseignement des hiérophantes d'Éleusis. En outre les

(1) Les indications qui suivent sont tirées principalement de Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités*, art. « Mysteria », « Sabazios », « Orphici », « Cabiri », « Gorgo ».

néo-platoniciens eux-mêmes ont des mystères philosophiques et magiques accompagnés d'incantations et de sacrifices qui constituent des sortes de séances théurgiques.

Signalons en outre la Hêrôïs, fête mystérieuse et mal connue qui se déroulait tous les neuf ans et représentait le retour de Sémélé des Enfers, et enfin le culte de héros, hommes semi-divinisés, qui présentait, à certains égards, beaucoup d'analogies avec les mystères.

En règle générale, on distinguait dans les mystères quatre phases :

1) purification ;
2) rites et sacrifices (sacrifices, processions, danses) ;
3) initiation ;
4) contemplation des mystères (époptie).

Cette dernière phase consistait en nuits mystiques qui comportaient : des actes (un drame mystique représentant la légende divine, par exemple la remontée de Déméter des Enfers), des exhibitions (la partie la plus importante : objets sacrés montrés par le « hiérophante »), et des paroles.

A l'origine, comme on le sait, certaines phases de certains mystères avaient un caractère bachique très prononcé : que l'on songe par exemple au culte du Dionysos primitif, dieu chtonien ; mais aussi à ceux de Cybèle et de Sabazios ; ce caractère devait s'estomper progressivement jusqu'à disparaître pratiquement.

Le mystère sabéen présente-t-il une ressemblance avec un type de mystère plus particulièrement ? Laissons de côté les mystères d'Éleusis pour l'instant.

Les mystères de Samothrace nous intéressent davantage : ce sont les mystères des Cabires (que l'on ne doit pas confondre avec les dieux phéniciens du même nom ; mais ce nom laisserait pourtant supposer une origine sémitique) qui, en fait, représentaient les grands dieux cosmiques. Ceux-ci auraient constitué une triade composée d'abord d'un couple : la Terre-mère (identifiée d'abord à Déméter, mais aussi à Aphrodite, Éra, Perséphone, puis Cybèle) ; son époux, Zeus, assimilé aussi à Hadès, Hélios, Dionysos et Héphaïstos ; et enfin leur fils Kadmilos, ordonnateur de l'univers, assimilé à *Éros* et à *Hermès*.

Enfin, ces mystères auraient fini par acquérir une parenté avec ceux de Cybèle et de Sabazios.

Les mystères de Sabazios (venus de Thrace), eux, se confondaient en partie, dès leur introduction en Grèce, avec le culte de Dionysos et celui de Cybèle (Terre-Mère). Démosthène raconte (*Pour la couronne*, 113) que de son temps, à Athènes, ces mystères étaient accompagnés de danses aux cris de Εὐοῖ, σαβοῖ, ὗης ἄττης ! Mais cela changea vraisemblablement par la suite, lorsque Sabazios réunit les puissances de plusieurs autres dieux, et fut même assimilé en Asie Mineure au Dieu des armées juif, Kyrios Sabaoth *(yahveh ṣebā'ōth)* ; alors, sans doute, ne resta-t-il plus de traces d'un mystère dionysiaque.

Quant au culte phrygien du couple Attis-Cybèle, il ne présente aucun rapport particulier avec notre mystère sabéen, du moins à l'origine (1).

Notons cependant que, sur le tard, Attis devient le dieu soleil et porte alors un bonnet semé d'étoiles, à la tête couronnée de rayons et surmontée d'un croissant, qu'il est le roi des mois, et se confond aussi avec Mèn-Lunus. Puis il est assimilé, entre autres, à Adonis (dont la mort rappelle la sienne) et à Sabazios.

Ce qui pourrait aussi avoir eu, directement ou indirectement, une influence considérable sur le sabéïsme, c'est l'orphisme, et je pense notamment à sa doctrine de la métempsychose qu'il doit vraisemblablement à Pythagore.

L'orphisme, né lui aussi du culte de Dionysos, a une origine très ancienne, mais les premiers écrits orphiques connus datent du VI^e^ siècle, Selon les sources antiques, il aurait pris naissance en Thrace, patrie d'Orphée ; mais il aurait eu aussi des rapports avec la Phrygie, et le grand dieu des orphiques aurait souvent été confondu avec Sabazios.

L'orphisme se serait développé sous l'influence du pythagorisme (avec lequel sa doctrine présente une étroite analogie) ; puis, plus tard, il aurait subi l'influence des autres doctrines (ce qui n'a rien d'étonnant quand on songe à ce que leurs initiateurs,

(1) Cybèle-Kybebe est la *Kubaba* des Hittites (cf. Dussaud, *La religion des Hittites et des Hourrites*, 341).

à commencer par Platon, doivent à Pythagore) : platonisme, stoïcisme, puis néo-platonisme et même christianisme.

Les orphiques eurent une cosmogonie très complexe : ils conservèrent les dieux grecs officiels, adoptèrent des dieux étrangers et inventèrent des dieux abstraits, symboliques et allégoriques (le mythe d'Éros et de l'œuf cosmique suffit à montrer le rôle que jouait chez eux l'allégorie). Mais ces dieux, par leur multitude même, et sans doute sous l'influence de doctrines philosophiques comme le pythagorisme et le platonisme, tendirent de plus en plus à se fondre en un seul (Zagreus) : ils devenaient « des noms, des formes ou des incarnations d'un même dieu ». L'orphisme devenait donc un monothéisme, en même temps qu'un « demi-panthéisme où le souverain dieu symbolise la vie universelle », et le syncrétisme alexandrin favorisa cette évolution ; les orphiques avaient, entre autres formules, la suivante : « Zeus est un, Hadès est un, Hélios est un, Dionysos est un : il y a un seul dieu en toutes choses. » C'était une « religion mystique » dont l'essentiel était « la pureté de vie, la doctrine, la préparation à la mort et la vie future » (qui faisait appel à l'idée de réincarnation) ; les orphiques avaient la préoccupation constante de l'au-delà, « obéissaient à des prescriptions sévères » et s'adonnaient à « des spéculations théologiques » ; leurs mystères étaient « les plus mystérieux des mystères ». Ceux-ci étaient basés sur l'idée du péché originel (l'homme, issu du sang des Titans, avait assassiné Zagreus, fils de Zeus : allégorie empruntée, semble-t-il, aux Pythagoriciens) [1] ils accordaient une importance particulière « aux exposés de doctrine et à l'observance d'une vie ascétique » (s'opposant par là aux autres religions d'origine dionysiaque) ; des exercices religieux communs (prières, récitation de « discours sacrés » ou *hieroï logoï*, formules pour guider les défunts aux enfers). Remarquons encore que les derniers pythagoriciens entrèrent souvent dans des confréries orphiques et que les néo-platoniciens, comme avant eux Platon, furent séduits par l'orphisme ; que, selon les hymnes orphiques, il y avait une fête collective en l'honneur de

(1) Songeons à la notion d'une sorte de péché originel chez les Sabéens et les Ismaïliens.

tous les dieux (ce qui évoque la cérémonie décrite par les Iḫwān) ; et qu'enfin des inscriptions de la grande Grèce datant du IVe et IIIe siècle avant J.-C. appellent les initiés les « purs », les saints, les pieux (ou justes = *abrār* en arabe), termes que les Iḫwān auraient pu emprunter aux Sabéens d'autant plus facilement qu'ils trouvaient leur équivalent dans le Coran. Notons aussi que selon Šahrastānī, les haricots figuraient parmi les aliments interdits chez les Sabéens ; or, l'on sait que la fève était interdite chez les pythagoriciens et les orphiques. Cependant, les orphiques répudiaient les sacrifices, sauf, exceptionnellement, le sacrifice des bœufs destinés à l'homophagie.

Quant aux mystères d'Isis, on pourrait penser qu'ils ont pénétré à Ḥarrān avec l'hermétisme ; d'autant plus que la mort d'Osiris, vengé par Isis et ressuscité en la personne de Horus (Osiris représentant le soleil et Isis, la terre féconde), symbolise fort bien la résurrection. Et puis Isis règne sur la voûte céleste ; Sirius est l'étoile qui lui est consacrée mais elle est aussi la *déesse lune.* Qui plus est, on trouve aussi son image sur *des bagues* et des amulettes destinées à protéger contre le mauvais œil, ce qui évoque la bague à tête de Gorgone, et son nom dans des formules propitiatoires. Elle est la divinité favorite du syncrétisme. Cependant, les mystères et l'initiation, assez analogues à ceux d'Éleusis, ne ressemblent pas particulièrement à ceux des Sabéens.

Beaucoup plus intéressants sont pour nous les mystères de Mithra, et surtout la doctrine du mithriacisme.

Son culte, en effet, qui serait plus ancien que le zoroastrisme, a été introduit à Babylone sous les Achéménides et s'est transformé sous l'influence de l'astrolatrie chaldéenne. C'est de là qu'il s'est répandu en Asie Mineure, puis en Occident. La transformation du mithriacisme s'est continuée après Alexandre : Ormuzd est devenu Zeus, Mithra, Apollon et Veretragna, Hercule et le stoïcisme a contribué à modifier totalement l'esprit de la théologie mazdéenne.

Dans certains endroits, le culte de Mithra s'est combiné avec celui d'Attis et de *Mèn.* Mithra a vraisemblablement été assimilé à d'autres divinités, comme par exemple *Sabazios.*

Sous l'influence de l'astrologie babylonienne, les mithriacistes

firent des puissances divines, non seulement du soleil et de la lune mais aussi des cinq autres planètes (1) ; ils divisèrent les étoiles et constellations, les hémisphères célestes (assimilés aux dioscures), les signes du zodiaque ; sans parler *des mois et des saisons* (le temps cyclique). Ils donnèrent à la naissance de Mithra, ainsi qu'à Mithra solaire, taurochtone et créateur, des explications astronomiques.

Les Mithriacistes mettent à la tête de la hiérarchie divine le temps infini (Ayôn et Kronos-Saturne, correspondant au destin babylonien). D'abord furent créés le ciel et la terre, et celle-ci enfanta l'Océan ; c'est la triade suprême : Zeus, Éra et Poseïdon, mais sans doute aussi la triade babylonienne, Anu (ciel), sa parèdre Ki (la terre) et Ea, dieu des eaux. Toutes les autres divinités sont issues de Jupiter et de Junon.

Tous les dieux se trouvent réunis avec Jupiter dans la clarté de l'empyrée (le *Yezdān*), tandis que dans les enfers, Ahriman, avec Hécate, régnait sur la foule des démons. On voit que la Gorgone de notre texte, masculinisée, a un rapport étroit avec Ahriman. Et les initiés *offraient aux démons des sacrifices pour détourner leur colère ou les amener à satisfaire leurs besoins.*

D'autre part, après la mort, Mithra a pour mission de conduire les âmes au paradis (on comprend le rôle qu'il doit jouer dans un mystère qui célèbre la résurrection).

Les âmes, avant la naissance, descendent vers la terre en traversant les sphères célestes et reçoivent de chacune leurs qualités ; en remontant, elles se dépouillent des facultés dont les sept astres les avaient dotées avant d'arriver au plus haut du paradis. On a là une conception très voisine, non seulement de celle des Sabéens, mais aussi de celle des Iḫwān. L'immortalité est réservée aux initiés : chez les Sabéens, il existe quelque chose d'analogue ; croyant à la réincarnation, ils pensent cependant que les âmes des initiés pourront éviter de descendre à nouveau dans les ténèbres d'un corps.

Enfin, si les mithriacistes continuent à adorer le feu, l'eau, la

(1) Mithra solaire est en général représenté sur les bas-reliefs avec six personnages (les six planètes), et le chien, son fidèle compagnon. Cf. Iḫwān, III, 318 et *Imāmat...*, 79.

terre et l'air, ils voient en eux, sous l'influence des Grecs, les quatre éléments.

Mais bien d'autres points ont une évidente parenté avec la doctrine sabéenne, notamment celui qui concerne le droit divin des rois.

En effet, pour les Mazdéens, qui suivaient là dans une certaine mesure les Assyro-babyloniens, les souverains légitimes régnaient par la volonté divine et étaient *éclairés par une grâce spéciale*, accordée par Mithra ; et selon les théories astrologiques, le soleil (Mithra) dotait le roi, à sa naissance, des vertus du souverain. On a retrouvé un point de vue très analogue chez les Iḫwān qui, sans doute, le tenaient des Sabéens.

Il y avait d'autre part chez les Mithriacistes sept degrés d'initiation, chaque échelon portant un nom particulier. Mais il y avait un autre mode de hiérarchisation : les trois premiers degrés étaient groupés sous le nom de servants (hyperèntountés), qui ne célébraient pas les mystères ; au-dessus, venaient les participants (métékhontés) et, à la tête des fidèles, il y avait les « pères » qui dirigaient le culte, le « père des pères » étant le chef des communautés d'une ville. Ne serait-ce pas de là que serait venue, chez les Iḫwān, par l'intermédiaire des Sabéens, la hiérarchie des 4, 40, 400 et 4000 (parce que les Iḫwān pensaient en trouver une justification dans le Coran) ?

Notons aussi que les Mithriacistes faisaient preuve d'une grande tolérance, que nous retrouvons comme l'un des grands principes chez les Iḫwān et que leur morale favorise l'action ce qui est aussi le cas chez les Iḫwān.

Voyons maintenant si dans les cérémonies sabéennes que décrivent les Iḫwān, on peut retrouver des éléments appartenant à certains mystères grecs ou au mythriacisme.

Chez les Grecs, l'initiation avait lieu dans des locaux spéciaux appelés « telesterion », « anaktoron » ou « megaron ». Le local où s'effectue l'initiation décrite par les Iḫwān pourrait donc être une salle de ce type.

A partir d'une certaine époque, les règlements étaient, dans diverses villes, affichés à la porte du temple. A Acacesion, il y avait un megaron souterrain dans le portique duquel était affiché le rituel ; et des inscriptions portent des prescriptions. A Andania

existaient des livres rituels. Tout cela n'évoque-t-il pas le code du temple sabéen, mentionné par les Iḫwān ?

D'autre part, à Acacesion, on ne devait porter ni bijoux, ni *bagues ;* les hommes *ne devaient pas être vêtus ;* les vêtements rouges étaient proscrits. Les femmes enceintes ou allaitant ne devaient pas se faire initier. Les bagues et amulettes représentant Isis (Isis lune sans doute) rappellent aussi la bague à tête de Gorgone.

Chez les orphiques, les initiés portaient des vêtements blancs (après l'initiation ?), symbole de pureté.

A Samothrace (mystères des cabires), le purificateur procédait à la confession du néophyte. L'initié avait la tête ceinte d'une couronne d'olivier et d'une *bandelette* de pourpre (espoir de résurrection).

Dans les mystères de Sabazios, l'initié était arrosé à l'*eau du cratère,* frotté d'argile et de son et devait dire : « J'ai fui le mal, j'ai trouvé le mieux ».

Dans tout cela, on ne peut trouver qu'une lointaine analogie avec la cérémonie décrite par les Iḫwān si ce n'est la nudité de l'initié (avant l'initiation) et le fait qu'il porte une bandelette, puis revêt, après l'initiation, une robe blanche.

Mais on peut se demander si l'interdiction du port de la bague n'a pas justement un rapport avec la bague qui porte la tête de Gorgone (on y reviendra), et si l'eau du cratère ne correspond pas à la « boisson que contient le vase » dans la cérémonie sabéenne.

N'oublions pas cependant que seuls quelques détails des mystères grecs nous sont connus, et que, de leur côté, les Iḫwān ne nous ont donné qu'un aspect vraisemblablement très partiel des cérémonies sabéennes.

Chez les Mithriacistes, les temples étaient souterrains ; mais dans un temple de Mithra à Ostie, était représentée une échelle mystique qui représentait les sept sphères célestes : le prêtre s'y arrêtait pour les invoquer. Les cérémonies d'initiation, telles qu'elles nous sont connues, comportent quelques traits de ressemblance frappants avec les cérémonies sabéennes que décrivent les Iḫwān.

Au myste qui passait au 3e degré, on offrait *une couronne, interposito gladio ;* il la repoussait et renonçait à en porter une,

parce qu'elle appartenait à Mithra. Dans la couronne que mentionne le Hiérophante sabéen, et le couteau de fer qui simule le sacrifice, n'y a-t'il pas un écho de ce rite ? D'autre part, on apposait *au front du myste un sceau*, vraisemblablement une marque au fer rouge, dit Cumont. La marque faite au pouce du myste à l'aide de la bague à l'effigie de Gorgone chauffée au feu n'a-t-elle pas un rapport avec ce rite ? Il y avait aussi une sorte de communion où l'on consacrait du pain et de l'eau mêlée de vin ; n'est-ce pas, chez les Sabéens, remplacé par le sel formant un dessin triangulaire ? Le prêtre de Mithra récite les prières, par exemple en l'honneur des planètes, le jour qui leur est consacré et procède aux sacrifices.

Parmi les épreuves imposées pour le passage d'un degré à un autre, il y en avait une où le néophyte avait les yeux bandés, et les mains attachées avec des boyaux de poulets ; cela évoque le fait que le néophyte sabéen était amené au hiérophante à reculons, et les mains tenues par deux prêtres ; et les boyaux de poulets évoquent le sacrifice du coq.

Pourtant, si le sacrifice d'autres animaux est fréquemment mentionné, il n'est pas question, à part ce détail, du sacrifice d'un coq.

Au reste, les rites mithriatiques comportent de multiples détails qui n'ont aucun rapport avec les rites sabéens et qui prouvent que les Sabéens n'étaient pas de purs adorateurs de Mithra.

Par contre, le Dieu Mèn-lunus a pour attribut un coq, qui représente donc l'animal dont le sacrifice lui est le plus agréable.

Si donc les mystères ont eu tendance à se fondre les uns dans les autres, les mystères sabéens représentent une nouvelle phase de ce syncrétisme.

SENS DU MYSTÈRE SABÉEN

Mais est-il possible de trouver aux rites sabéens une origine plus précise ? Essayons d'abord de trouver au mystère sabéen un sens plus clair.

Le local d'initiation a été inauguré au moment où tous les astres étaient dans leur chance ; il semble que ce soit un panthéon

astral ; et pourtant les Iḫwān disent qu'il s'agit du temple de Gorgone.

Les deux choses semblent incompatibles. Le fait est que Gorgone y joue un rôle fort important. Le chaton de la bague porte une tête de Gorgone : c'est un gorgoneïon (le même que l'on voit sur le bouclier d'Athèna). Ce masque de Gorgone est d'origine orientale (il a un rapport avec les monstres hittites et assyriens et aussi avec le dieu égyptien Bès) ; mais, dès l'origine, chez les Grecs, tout en représentant l'une des trois gorgones, Méduse, il est aussi commun à toutes les catégories de génies. Il a une valeur phophylactique et les Grecs et les Romains en ont toujours un dans les actes importants de leur vie. Du point de vue astral, les Grecs situaient les gorgoneïa au centre du Zodiaque ; mais, en outre, les orphiques y voyaient une image de la lune. Si les Sabéens tenaient cela des orphiques (ou peut-être des pythagoriciens, car leur religion, ne l'oublions pas, était astrale, et c'est Pythagore qui, avant Platon, a attribué une âme aux astres), on peut comprendre la fortune dont a joui chez eux la Gorgone puisque Ḥarrān avait été, depuis la plus haute antiquité, le centre d'un culte lunaire.

De fait, il semble que notre Gorgone ḥarrānienne ait été assimilée à Hécate et ait représenté les deux Hécates : l'Hécate « simple » et l'Hécate « triple ». L'Hécate simple, assimilée à Séléné et représentant la lumière de la lune, était bienfaisante. L'Hécate triple, ou infernale, portière de l'enfer et gardienne de Cerbère, assimilée à Perséphone, était malfaisante. On la représentait parfois sous la forme d'une lune à la face ricanante. Elle avait donné naissance à des démons affreux. Tandis que l'Hécate simple guidait avec bienveillance les voyageurs égarés la nuit, L'Hécate triple, déesse des carrefours, leur envoyait des fantômes et des monstres, prenant parfois elle-même une forme terrifiante. Déesse de la magie, elle avait été l'initiatrice des pratiques magiques funestes. A Rome, sous l'empire, il semble qu'on ait rendu un culte, dans les carrefours, à la fois à Hécate et aux démons malfaisants. On offrait à l'Hécate triple repas et sacrifices (surtout des chiens, il est vrai) pour se la rendre favorable. Elle était l'objet d'un culte mystérieux et avait en outre une fête annuelle au cours de laquelle on procédait vrai-

semblablement à des initiations. Enfin, les trois faces d'Hécate auraient représenté les trois phases de la lune (Daremberg et Saglio, *Hécate*).

D'après ce qui précède, on comprend que la triple Hécate ait pu facilement se confondre avec les trois gorgones.

Mais d'autre part, de même qu'Hécate a souvent été associée à Mithra, la Gorgone était parfois, d'après les monuments grecs, mise en rapport avec Apollon, symbole de la lumière solaire.

Dès lors, tout semble s'éclairer si l'on se réfère au sens de la cérémonie. Ce mystère, comme tous les mystères, symbolise la résurrection. Le jeune homme est amené au hiérophante à reculons, prisonnier et sans savoir où il va, mais conduit par deux prêtres initiés ; cela évoque manifestement son ignorance avant l'initiation, et le besoin qu'il a d'être guidé. Le simulacre de sacrifice représente une substitution de victime (cf. le sacrifice d'Isaac).

A un niveau plus élevé, il symbolise le sacrifice du corps en vue de la vie de l'âme.

Mais que vient ici faire le coq sacrifié à la place du néophyte ? Notons d'abord que le coq était pour les pythagoriciens un animal sacré ; peut-être l'était-t-il aussi pour les orphiques et les Sabéens comme il l'était pour les adorateurs de Mèn. De fait, le hiérophante sabéen, invoquant Gorgone, évoque, à propos du coq, le « battement d'aile des êtres divins » et le fait que le coq monte au sommet des arbres. Son sacrifice n'évoquerait-il pas la pré-résurrection de l'initié qui permettra l'initiation ? Ne symboliserait-il pas aussi la possibilité d'une réincarnation dans un corps meilleur que celui d'un animal ? Mais pourquoi spécialement le coq ? Ne serait-ce pas parce qu'il annonce le lever du soleil (d'où son « agressivité » à l'égard de Gorgone qui symbolise la lune, et la haine que lui voue Gorgone) ? Quand, d'autre part, le coq annonce le lever du soleil, il chante en quelque sorte la lumière divine et appelle à la purification. Mais, en outre, la lumière divine, c'est Apollon et Mithra, le contraire de Gorgone et de Ahriman qui, en tant que démon, symbolise l'obscurité des corps et le contraire de la lune qui s'occupe du développement des corps, tandis que le soleil régit les âmes.

Qui plus est, pour les Grecs, Apollon (1) était un « dieu purificateur qui efface la souillure du crime et réconcilie les coupable avec les hommes et les dieux » (Bailly, *Dict. grec-français*). Et l'on comprend alors pourquoi la cérémonie se passe dans cette sorte de panthéon.

Le jeune initié donne l'anneau à tête de Gorgone en gage de fidélité et de secret, parce qu'il renonce aux appétits du bas monde et renonce à défendre son corps ici bas. Dès lors, son « ascension » se fera avec l'aide de tous les dieux, et Gorgone, se contentant de garder les débris du corps (sacrifié en la personne du coq) (2), ne fera pas opposition au départ de l'âme. La marque infligée au pouce du patient à l'aide du gorgoneïon est en quelque sorte un laissez-passer accordé à son âme par Gorgone.

N'oublions pas d'ailleurs les légendes qui entourent la naissance d'Apollon : les cygnes sacrés accomplirent sept fois le tour de l'île d'Ortygie (Délos). Apollon fixa à sept le nombre des cordes de la lyre ; ses fêtes ont lieu d'abord le 7 du mois de Bysios (dernier mois d'hiver à Delphes), puis de chaque mois.

LE MYSTÈRE SABÉEN, MYSTÈRE BABYLONIEN

Mais certains indices semblent prouver que ce mystère grec recouvrait en fait le vieux culte babylonien de Ḥarrān, ainsi que le pensait Chwolson. La religion astrale des babyloniens portait en germe certaines des cosmogonies gnostiques. La notion de sphères célestes est issue de la conception que les Babyloniens se faisaient fort anciennement des voûtes célestes superposées (jusqu'à la plus haute, celle du Dieu Anu), et l'on sait que ce sont vraisemblablement des « Chaldéens » qui ont inspiré à Pythagore sa théorie des sphères.

(1) Šahrastānī mentionne (Š., II, 770) que, pour certains Sabéens, le soleil était le dieu suprême ; peut-être veut-il parler de ceux qu'il appelle les Sabéens persans. Mais peut-être aussi s'agit-il d'Apollon, finalement élevé au rang suprême, ou plus vraisemblablement, constituant la puissance la plus importante du dieu suprême.

(2) L'aile gauche du coq égorgé que l'on accroche aux femmes enceintes et aux enfants en tant qu'amulette (au même titre que le gorgoneïon) peut symboliser la bienveillance de Gorgone pacifiée pour le corps de l'enfant, en même temps qu'un espoir d'épanouissement pour son âme.

La notion d'un monde archétype et d'un macrocosme opposé au microcosme semble dérivé de la conception babylonienne de l'univers. Les quatre quartiers de la terre ont leur équivalent dans la carte des étoiles et l'histoire de la terre est écrite dans les révolutions des étoiles (1). Les théories astrologiques babyloniennes ont abouti à la doctrine des cycles astrologiques qui régissent le monde. L'idée même de sympathie universelle était impliquée à plus ou moins longue échéance par ces théories.

En ce qui concerne les dieux, l'épopée de la création dit que « les étoiles sont les images des dieux », mais l'étoile est le domaine du dieu et non le dieu lui-même, ce qui correspond, semble-t-il, à la conception sabéenne.

Quant à la conception que les Perses se faisaient de la royauté, c'est sans doute des Babyloniens qu'ils la tenaient. Si les dieux sont les rois de l'univers, le roi est l'image du dieu. Le souverain babylonien participe à la divinité parce qu'un dieu a mis sur lui le signe divin de la puissance (2). Le roi, élu des dieux, est doué des plus hautes perfections (3), et c'est Šamaš, dieu-soleil, qui lui donne les lois et l'art de gouverner. Comme l'a montré M. David (4), on peut distinguer dans l'univers babylonien quatre échelons : les dieux qui décrètent le destin ; le roi « à travers qui passe le courant du destin » et qui veille à son exécution ; les hommes (ils doivent être totalement soumis à la volonté des dieux et du roi) qui subissent le destin, mais aussi le mettent en œuvre sur les choses d'ici-bas ; enfin, les choses, qui se bornent à le subir. C'est donc au souverain qu'il appartient de connaître le destin *(šimtu)*, la volonté des dieux, en vue de son application, ce qui confère à l'astrologie et à la divination une importance capitale. N'avons-nous pas là une préfiguration de ce que sera le rôle de l'*imām* aux yeux des Iḫwān, et aussi du rôle que doit jouer pour eux l'astrologie et la magie (5) ?

Le roi pouvait aussi connaître la volonté divine par les songes :

(1) A ce propos voit Bottéro, *La religion babylonienne*, 76 et ss.
(2) Cf. Labat, *Royauté*, 7 et ss.
(3) *Ibid.*, 61.
(4) *Les dieux et le destin en Babylonie*, 27 et ss.
(5) Cf. *Imāmat...*, 69.

« vision véridique » avant la lettre (1), et le *bârû* (voyant) est doué de la vision prophétique.

Le rôle joué par la magie montre d'ailleurs à quel point les Sabéens de Ḥarrān sont restés babyloniens ; car en dehors du culte destiné à honorer les dieux, les Babyloniens usaient de magie pour obliger les dieux à « satisfaire leurs besoins ». Cette magie-là est « licite et honorée » (2). Le mal causé par les péchés était provoqué par les démons et par ce que les Iḫwān appelleraient des « démons en puissance », les sorciers *(kaššāpu)*, qui eux usaient de « magie illicite ». La foule des démons, *utukkī* (parmi lesquels *Lamaštu* démon femelle aurait pu être assimilée à Gorgone), constituait en somme une sorte de « cité satanique » (l'anti-calife, aux yeux des Iḫwān, est victime d'un enchantement ; c'est évidemment d'un enchantement du même ordre qu'il s'agit) (3).

Aux yeux des Babyloniens, il fallait donc se garder de façon permanente contre les démons et sorciers qui provoquent maladie ou péché. Ils avaient pour cela recours notamment à des incantations et exorcismes, à des prières adressées au génie protecteur de chaque homme ou à un dieu secourable, mais aussi à des amulettes sous forme, entre autres, de figures affreuses. Sans doute la tête de Gorgone de l'anneau du prêtre sabéen (4) n'est-elle que l'hellénisation de ces anciennes figures.

L'importance que le nombre 7 (bien que tous aient leur valeur à leurs yeux) a chez les Iḫwān, est aussi un héritage de la Babylonie, transmis vraisemblablement par les Sabéens :

Il y a les Pléïades (Sibi, sibitti ; arabe : *sab'at*, *sab'*).

Le nombre 7 s'applique aussi à sept dieux des cieux (les bons) et à ceux des enfers. A Ninive, les constellations formaient des groupes de sept rattachés à Jupiter, Mars, Mercure, Saturne :

(1) Cf. mon article *Révélation et vision véridique*, dans *R.E.I.*, 1965. Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, IX, chap. I) nous apprend que les Sabéens croient à la « vision véridique ou autre » et que leur conception à ce sujet est conforme à celle d'Aristote (*Métaphysique*). Mais le fond de cette croyance est beaucoup plus ancien.

(2) David, *op. cit.*, 68.

(3) Cf. *Imāmat...*, 68.

(4) Cf. notamment David *op. cit.*, 47 et ss.

le premier était celui des sept Lumaši qui étaient l'image des grands dieux.

Il y avait les sept planètes ; et une liste des divinités à qui on devait offrir des sacrifices commence par les sept planètes.

Il y avait à Ninive un temple des sept (ce qui évoque notre temple sabéen), et le rituel des fêtes du Nouvel An à Babylone indique que les *planètes étaient invoquées comme Sin (la lune) et Šamaš (le soleil), en même temps d'ailleurs que d'autres étoiles* (Dhorme, *Rel. bab. et ass.*, p. 79 et 80).

Les sept étages de la ziqurat de Borsippa symbolisaient les sept planètes, et celle-ci s'appelait en sumérien « Maison des sept guides du ciel et de la terre » *(É-ur-imin-an-ki)* [1].

Un temple était bâti au moment où le dieu à qui il était destiné le voulait ; et ce dieu en fixait le lieu et le plan. On choisissait le mois et le jour favorables.

Le dieu pouvait manifester sa volonté par rêve, mais on pouvait aussi faire appel aux devins (et sans doute aux astrologues). La déesse Nisaba, à qui on construit un temple, annonce « l'étoile pure de la construction du temple ». On faisait intervenir aussi les dieux de la magie (Ea et Marduk) durant la nuit, et, le matin, Samaš, dieu soleil, intervenait à son tour. La « brique du destin» *(agurru šimti)* marquait l'emplacement d'un futur temple. Un temple était toujours reconstruit à la même place, et le jour où les assises du temple et le *temennu* étaient en place devenait un jour faste (ce qui se produit pour le temple sabéen). On demandait encore l'assentiment du dieu avant d'inaugurer le temple.

Devant l'entrée du temple, il y avait une table à offrandes avec brûle-parfums et bassin aux ablutions, qui évoquent le matériel du temple sabéen. Lors de la reconstruction d'un temple, l'architecte qui extrayait la brique de fondation de l'ancien temple portait un bracelet de plomb qui avait manifestement une valeur prophylactique analogue à celle de la bague au gorgoneïon.

Notons encore qu'à l'intérieur du destin fixé par les dieux, l'homme a une marge de liberté ; que les dieux peuvent intervenir pour réduire les démons à l'impuissance, mais ne sont pas

(1) Cf. Dhorme, *La religion des Babyloniens et des Assyriens*, 181.

responsables des entreprises des démons. Les Sabéens de Ḥarrān ont gardé cette façon de voir (1). Enfin, si les pythagoriciens ont introduit dans l'hellénisme la valeur sacrée du nombre, elle remonte sans aucun doute aux Babyloniens. Chacun des dieux avait un nombre, et le roi Aššurbanipal mentionne dans une inscription « le nombre de son nom ».

Il semble donc que la religion sabéenne soit la religion babylonienne propre à Ḥarrān, lieu de culte lunaire, mais d'abord iranisée depuis les Achéménides, puis fondue avec les cultes grecs déjà syncrétisés (2).

Mais, d'autre part, la fête de Kāḏī semble, elle aussi, comme d'ailleurs celle du 1er Nīsān, une fête babylonienne.

En effet, en Babylonie, la fête du Nouvel An se situait au début de Nīsān (avril) ; elle était, en même temps, la fête du printemps et c'était la grande fête des Babyloniens. La cérémonie avait lieu dans le temple.

Mais il y avait aussi, en Nīsān, une fête de douze jours avec

(1) Il est possible que certains de ces éléments remontent au patrimoine du sémitique commun, et c'est pourquoi, indépendamment des apports orientaux hellénisés, les Iḫwān ont pu trouver là des correspondances avec les données coraniques, ce qui légitimait à leurs yeux cet emprunt.

A propos du macrocosme et du microcosme, du monde d'en haut et du monde d'en bas : rappelons-nous le début du poème babylonien de la création (Enuma eliš) : « Quand en haut *(eliš = a'lä l-'illiyyīn)* le ciel était innommé, qu'en bas *(šapliš = asfala l-sāfilīn)* la terre n'était pas mentionnée (= non encore créée)... ». La Ka'ba a sa réplique dans le monde d'en haut : de même, chez les Babyloniens, aux temples terrestres correspondaient des temples célestes. Le Coran archétype (qui, on le sait, prend une importance particulière chez les Iḫwān) peut correspondre à la tablette des destins *(duppu šimāti)*. Le verbe divin lui-même *(kalima)* a son correspondant babylonien *(amātu)*. La notion de crainte du dieu et le *tawakkul* ont chez les Babyloniens la même importance qu'en Islam (cf. en akkadien le verbe *takālu* et le nom *tukultu*, racine *tkl<wkl ; « Marduk utakkilanni...* » Marduk m'a soutenu..., écrit le roi, revenu vainqueur d'une expédition.

(2) Selon Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, IX, chap. II), Mercure était Nabū, et Bel correspondait à Saturne. De fait, le qualificatif de Bel (le « Seigneur ») s'appliquait plus particulièrement à Enlil (deuxième dieu de la triade suprême et dieu de la terre).

Quant au dieu des dieux, au dieu suprême des Sabéens, on peut supposer qu'il est issu du dieu suprême babylonien, celui du ciel, Anu (en akkadien, *ilū = el, elah*).

Mais les Ḥarrāniens avaient sans doute gardé bien d'autres vestiges de leur antique patrimoine ; par exemple ils avaient les cheveux longs et portaient la longue robe à manches *(qabā')*, jusqu'au moment où al-Ma'mūn le leur interdit. N'est-ce pas là le costume des Assyriens et néo-Babyloniens ?

procession à l'*akītu* (maison de campagne du dieu) (1). Dans chaque ville la fête de l'*akītu* différait et était célébrée en l'honneur du dieu de la ville. A Babylone, c'était naturellement la fête de Marduk, grand dieu de la cité, et qui y représentait peut-être, entre autres choses, le soleil. Mentionnons quelques rites de la fête de l'*akītu* à Babylone (2) :

Le 2e jour, l'urigallu (3) purifié et *vêtu de lin* supplie Marduk d'avoir pitié de Babylone ; après quoi a lieu l'office du jour.

Le 3e jour, entre autres cérémonies, on sacrifie un mouton ; le roi *se laisse dépouiller de ses insignes* par l'urigallu, proclame son innocence, reçoit un soufflet symbolique et *reprend possession de ses insignes.*

Le 4e jour, après et avant d'autres rites, l'urigallu récite en entier l'« Enuma eliš », poème de la création. (On conçoit que les prêtres sabéens aient remplacé ce texte par des textes philosophiques grecs plus récents) (4).

Les 6e et 7e jours, ont lieu les préparatifs de la procession. Le 8e jour et les jours suivants, la procession part et gagne le temple de l'*akītu*. Les dieux demeurent dans ce temple où l'on célèbre par un mime sacré le combat que Marduk livre aux enfers contre les démons, après quoi l'on récite à nouveau l'« Enuma eliš » (Quand en haut...). La procession rentre le dernier jour.

Or, on sait qu'à l'époque babylonienne, on célébrait aussi la fête de l'*akītu* à Ḥarrān où il existait un temple de l'*akītu : bīt akīti* (le temple de la maison de campagne) ; Kāḏī ne serait-il pas une déformation du génitif de ce mot babylonien : *akīti?*

Il est vraisemblable qu'à Ḥarrān, la fête, à l'origine, se soit adressée à Sin, grand dieu de la ville, mais que le dieu soleil Šamaš, et peut être aussi Ištar-Vénus, y aient joué un rôle important, peut-être même égal à celui de Sin : les trois dieux constituaient la grande triade astrale.

(1) Il y avait une autre fête analogue en Tišrīṭ, début de l'automne.

(2) Cf. résumé dans Bottéro, *op. cit.*, 127.

(3) Grand prêtre, chef des célébrants *ērib bīti* = ceux qui entrent dans le temple (les initiés) ?

(4) Peut-être l'invocation platonicienne, la demande d'intercession idrīsite et l'oraison aristotélicienne ont-elles remplacé l'« Enuma eliš », ainsi que différents hymnes babyloniens.

Pourtant la fête de Kāḏī célèbre le dieu Erôs *(Ārūs)*. Dans les plus anciennes cosmogonies grecques, comme celle d'Hésiode, Erôs était un des éléments primordiaux, venant après le chaos, avec la terre et le Tartare (1).

Eschyle, dans ses Danaïdes, le représentait comme un agent d'union entre le ciel et la terre, celle-ci enfantant l'herbe et les grains après avoir été fécondée par la pluie : l'eau versée par Erôs et tombée de chez les dieux à l'époque d'Astronicus, comme le dit notre texte, ne serait-elle pas un écho de cette tradition ?

Devenu dieu de l'amour, Erôs est lié à Vénus-Aphrodite ; et si les Grecs le donnaient souvent pour son fils, des cosmogonies, et notamment celle d'Hésiode, le représentaient comme son aîné, et son compagnon. Génie ailé, il est souvent représenté avec un coq. Enfin, il prend aussi parfois le caractère d'un génie de la mort, et du sommeil (Erôs endormi). Mais, d'autre part, cet Erôs ḥarrānien évoque par certains aspects Adonis et son prototype babylonien Tammuz. On sait qu'Ištar-Aphrodite doit disputer à Perséphone-Ereškigal son amant et le lui céder périodiquement, mais, au printemps, Tammuz-Adonis, dieu de la végétation, remonte des enfers et revient à la lumière du jour.

Cependant, la fête de Kāḏī évoque aussi le culte d'Apollon (le Šamaš des babyloniens). Songeons à l'épiphanie delphique : Apollon, dieu de la lumière, éclipse de Delphes les divinités chtoniennes. Il s'absente de Delphes durant un tiers de l'année, et c'est alors Dionysos, divinité chtonienne, qui règne à sa place. Mais il s'absente aussi des autres sanctuaires où il est vénéré, et ses retours sont fêtés avec faste (par exemple son épidémia vers son sanctuaire de Cyrène). Il est possible que le syncrétisme ḥarrānien ait tendu à assimiler les trois dieux, Apollon, Adonis, Erôs, et que leur culte se soit fondu en outre avec celui de Sabazios, avec celui d'Osiris, renaissant en Horus, avec celui de Mithra et aussi, avec celui d'Attis (et Cybèle) qui comportait des fêtes de plusieurs jours commençant à l'équinoxe du printemps.

Il s'agit en tout cas de la fête du printemps et de la célébration du retour de la lumière solaire en même temps que de l'amour, et

(1) Cf. Daremberg et Saglio, art. « Cupido ».

surtout de la renaissance universelle, symbole de la résurrection de l'âme.

Mais derrière ce syncrétisme qui tend à simplifier en même temps qu'à abstraire, on retrouve les protagonistes babyloniens d'un vieux drame qui se joue entre le ciel et la terre et dont l'enjeu est la résurrection symbolisée par Tammuz que se disputent Šamaš le soleil et Ištar-Vénus d'un côté, Sin la lune et les génies infernaux de l'autre. Grâce au sacrifice du coq, « Erôs endormi », et génie de la mort, s'éveille à l'amour et à la vie, ou, comme diraient les Iḫwān, « se réveille du sommeil de la négligence et de l'ignorance », de la mort de l'âme.

Šamaš (qui était, en même temps que le soleil, le dieu de la justice, qui « donne la vie » et « fait revivre le mort », vainqueur de la nuit et de la mort) (2) serait devenu Apollon, tandis que Gorgone-Hécate représenterait peut-être à la fois Lamaštu, chef femelle des démons, et Sin, dieu-lune, dans la mesure où celui-ci, dieu bienfaisant, régit cependant, en même temps que les cycles du temps, la matière des corps, domaine favori des démons, et par conséquent, les démons eux-mêmes.

A l'origine, la lune venait avant le soleil dans la hiérarchie du panthéon babylonien, et à plus forte raison à Ḥarrān où elle tendait à devenir un dieu suprême. Mais on peut penser qu'à l'époque sabéenne, Šamaš avait grandi aux dépends de Sin.

S'il en est bien ainsi, alors la cérémonie d'initiation s'éclaire.

La substitution de victime (Dhorme, *Rel. Bab. et Ass.*, pp. 229-230) était une pratique courante dans l'ancien culte babylonien: la victime de remplacement était le *pūḫu* (ou le *dīnanu:* la « personne même ») L'impureté de l'homme qui avait commis une faute (connue ou inconnue de lui) était transférée sur la victime. Un rituel donne l'instruction suivante à propos d'un porcelet que l'on doit sacrifier à la place d'un malade (on sait

(1) Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, IX, chap. II) évoque la même légende sans mentionner *Ārūs* qu'il appelle seulement « l'idole de l'eau ».

De son côté, Tammūz est qualifié dans un taxte babylonien de la façon suivante : *ša apsi rē'um bēlim Du'uzu ḫāmir Ištar:* « Pasteur et seigneur de l'Apsu, Tammuz, époux d'Ištar ». Bien que le Maître de l'Apsu soit le dieu Ea, peut-être Tammūz avait-il un rapport avec ses eaux. Songeons aussi aux eaux de vie dont Ereškigal aspergeait celui qui devait remonter sur la terre.

(2) Cf. Dhorme, *op. cit.*, 63.

que la maladie était considérée comme donnée, elle aussi, par les démons et souvent à la suite d'une faute commise) : « Donne le porcelet à sa place, la chair pour sa chair, le sang pour son sang et *que les démons l'acceptent.* Le cœur que tu auras *placé au-dessus de son cœur*, donne le pour son cœur et qu'ils l'acceptent ». Dhorme donne également le texte d'une conjuration contre les mauvais démons *(utukkī limnuti)* : « L'agneau est la personne même de l'homme *(dīnanu)* ; pour sa vie il livrera l'agneau ; il livrera la tête de l'agneau pour la tête de l'homme, *le cou de l'agneau pour le cou de l'homme...* ». Il y a manifestement dans les paroles et les actes du prêtre sabéen un écho de ces formules.

D'autre part, Sin, dieu-lune, portait une double couronne (la pleine lune) surmontée du croissant, et les Babyloniens l'appelaient le « maître de la couronne » : *c'était lui qui donnait ou enlevait la couronne du souverain.* Ceci expliquerait le sens de la couronne dans les mystères mithriaques comme dans les mystères sabéens ; et peut-être le bandeau des mystères grecs a-t-il été adopté pour symboliser cette couronne.

Quant à l'aiguière de boisson située dans le temple à gauche des astres, peut-être faut-il y voir une survivance de l'*apsu* (analogue à la mer d'airain du temple de Jérusalem) qui, à l'origine, symbolisait la masse des eaux souterraines, dont Ea, le dieu des eaux, *mais aussi de la magie*, était le maître. L'eau purificatrice de l'*apsu* était souvent utilisée par les Babyloniens dans les rites de magie prophylactique (cf. Dhorme, *Rel. bab. et ass.*).

Enfin, l'anneau à chaton en forme de gorgoneïon est sans doute l'hellénisation des amulettes représentant des têtes affreuses de démons et qui avaient la même valeur que le gorgoneïon chez les Grecs, ainsi qu'on l'a déjà dit.

AUTRES FÊTES SABÉENNES

Mais il est probable que tout le culte des Sabéens de Ḥarrān était un culte babylonien, plus ou moins iranisé et surtout hellénisé.

Voici la traduction d'un passage des Iḫwān qu'a utilisé Corbin

dans son « *Rituel sabéen* », et qui peut-être nous en convaincra. Les Iḫwān nous y décrivent le culte que, selon eux, les philosophes grecs et leurs disciples parvenus au 1er degré d'initiation rendaient à Dieu trois fois par mois, ainsi que les fêtes qui avaient lieu, disaient-ils, quatre fois par an.

« Quant au culte philosophique et métaphysique, le premier degré — qui est celui auquel les philosophes antiques et les grands savants amenaient leurs enfants et leurs disciples après leur avoir enseigné les règles des disciplines *(siyāsāt)* corporelles et psychiques ainsi que les rites légaux du culte — [en est le suivant] :

« Ils avaient, dans chaque mois de l'année grecque — conformément au nombre de jours [de culte] auquel devait aboutir celui qui voulait suivre cette pratique (1) — trois jours : un au début, un au milieu, et un à la fin du mois.

« Le premier jour du mois, le philosophe doit faire ses ablutions le mieux du monde, se parfumer avec les meilleurs onguents *(baḫūr)* possibles, sans négliger de se purifier et d'accomplir les prières imposées par la loi religieuse. Puis en revenant du *miḥrāb* de la dernière prière du soir, il s'asseoit pour glorifier, sanctifier, exalter et magnifier *(hallala* et *kabbara)* Dieu jusqu'à la fin du premier tiers de la nuit. Puis il se lève, renouvelle ses ablutions et se purifie longuement pour qu'il y ait « pureté sur pureté et lumière sur lumière ».

« Il sort de sa maison jusqu'à arriver, sous la voûte céleste, en face du Capricorne qui est l'étoile à l'aide de laquelle on se guide (Dieu a dit : « ...des signes, et c'est à l'aide de l'étoile qu'ils se guident ») ; puis, il contemple le « Livre évident » (2), réfléchit sur ses prodiges, regarde sans arrêt la Royauté [céleste], tout en louant et sanctifiant Dieu, sans oublier les *takbīr* et les *tahlīl*, afin d'être de ceux dont Dieu a dit « ceux qui invoquent (le nom de) Dieu debout, assis et sur le côté et réfléchissent à la création du ciel et de la terre... ». Et il reste ainsi jusqu'aux deux

(1) Total de 48 jours.

(2) Le monde céleste, comparé avec le Coran, les prodiges du premier correspondant aux versets du second.

tiers de la nuit. Ainsi le premier tiers se passe à accomplir le culte légal, et le deuxième à réfléchir à la Royauté [céleste].

« Une fois passé le deuxième tiers, il se jette à terre en prosternation, et reste ainsi autant qu'il le peut, en pleurant, en implorant le pardon de [Dieu], en se repentant, en versant des larmes ; puis il se confesse ses péchés et prend la détermination d'adopter une bonne conduite et de faire de bonnes actions [1] *(yanwī)* ; il fait l'invocation platonicienne, la demande d'intercession idrīsite (hermétique) et l'oraison aristotélicienne mentionnées dans leurs livres ; et il continue ainsi jusqu'à l'apparition de l'aube. Alors il se lève, procède à de longues ablutions et purifications ; puis il revient à son *miḥrāb* et fait la prière de l'aube. Il s'asseoit à sa place jusqu'au lever du soleil. Alors, au début du jour, il égorge, de sa propre main s'il en a l'habitude, les animaux licites qu'il peut ; il fait préparer la nourriture qui se trouve, fait introduire auprès de lui sa famille et des « frères », et leur sert cette nourriture. Quand ils ont fini de manger, ils louent Dieu (que grand et puissant est Son nom !) et le remercient ; ils se prosternent devant Lui pour le remercier de ce qu'Il a bien voulu leur donner. Puis [le philosophe] leur enseigne autant de sagesse que le temps l'implique et que le lieu le permet. Ils continuent ainsi tout le reste du jour, jusqu'au moment de la dernière prière du soir. Alors ils rentrent chez eux, vaquent à leurs occupations et remplissent les occupations de leurs lois religieuses, jusqu'au jour [de culte] suivant, qui est le jour de la pleine lune, quand son cercle est parfait et que ses lumières y sont complètes. Cette nuit-là et le matin suivant, [le philosophe fait] comme il a fait le premier jour [du mois lunaire]. Puis il [continue] de même jusqu'au moment de partir, après la dernière prière du lendemain soir. Puis ils [recommencent] à la fin du mois suivant.

Ceux qui suivaient cette pratique traditionnelle avaient trois fêtes par an.

« La première fête, c'est le jour où le soleil entre dans le signe du Bélier, c'est-à-dire à l'équinoxe [de printemps]. <...> Ce jour-là doit être une fête où se manifeste la joie et la gaieté.

(1) Influence du pythagorisme ?

« Ce jour-là, les sages se réunissaient et rassemblaient leurs enfants et leurs jeunes disciples vêtus de leurs plus beaux atours et les plus propres du monde dans les temples qu'ils avaient [à cette époque]. Ils égorgeaient des victimes bonnes et pures, disposaient les tables, et servaient beaucoup de légumes, de laitages et de graines produites par la terre. Puis, quand ils avaient mangé joyeusement, ils se mettaient à faire de la musique tirant des cordes des sons qui mouvaient les âmes vers les préoccupations les plus hautes ainsi que de ravissantes mélodies, tout en faisant un cours *(tilāwa)* de philosophie (m.-à-m. : sagesse) et en dispensant la science. Cela assurait la quiétude de l'âme et une parfaite sociabilité. Ils continuaient ainsi toute la journée puis allaient vaquer à leurs occupations.

« Ce jour-là a, en grec, un nom bien connu chez eux : c'est le jour où le soleil arrive au début du Bélier, l'équinoxe *(naw')* de printemps.

« Quand le soleil entre dans le Cancer, c'est le jour de la deuxième fête : le solstice *(naw')* d'été <... >. Ce jour-là est une fête qui inaugure une nouvelle période faisant suite à la première. Les sages se réunissaient dans les temples bâtis pour ce jour-là, car pour chaque fête, ils avaient un temple où ils ne pénétraient dans cet équipage que le jour anniversaire [de la fête]. Ils pénétraient dans le temple construit, portant les vêtements qui convenaient à la nature de ce signe du zodiaque, et il en était de même pour la nourriture et la boisson dont ils usaient, ainsi que pour les fruits, intermédiaires entre les [fruits] secs et les fruits frais de la première fête (m.-à-m. catégorie). Et quand ils en avaient fini avec leurs obligations de ce jour-là, ils partaient et ne se réunissaient plus d'ici la troisième fête, qui est le jour où le soleil entre dans la Balance.

« Lorsque le soleil arrivait à la première minute du signe de la Balance, c'était à nouveau l'équinoxe et l'automne venait. <... > Ce jour-là était aussi un jour de fête ; ils pénétraient dans le temple bâti spécialement pour ce jour-là. Ils usaient de la nourriture qui correspond à ce jour et à cette période, et dispensaient la science qui lui convenait. Ils n'avaient pas d'autre fête ensuite, jusqu'à ce que le soleil atteigne la fin du Sagittaire et le début du Capricorne.

« La 4e Fête, c'est le solstice d'hiver. <.. > Les sages faisaient de ce jour-là un jour de deuil, de douleur, de repentir et de contrition. Ils jeûnaient et ne mangeaient pas.

« Si tu considères, ô frère, ces trois jours de l'année philosophique dont ils avaient fait des fêtes et des jours de réjouissance, [tu constateras que] leur plus grande joie [se donnait libre cours] le premier de ces trois jours ; elle était moindre le deuxième et moindre encore le troisième ; et le dernier était un jour de deuil et de douleur. Et cela jusqu'au moment où recommençait le nouveau cycle, lorsque le soleil parvenait à nouveau au début du signe du Bélier ».

« Si tu regardes bien les fêtes [prescrites par] la loi musulmane, tu constateras qu'elles correspondent à ces [fêtes grecques]... »

S'agit-il là d'un culte grec, comme l'affirment les Iḫwān ?

Les cérémonies qui se déroulent trois fois par mois, s'adressent, on l'a vu, à des initiés du 1er degré.

On pourrait être tenté d'y voir un rapport avec les « teletaï » théurgiques des néo-platoniciens.

Pourtant, elles sont les manifestations d'un culte astral (les unes suivent les cycles des jours et des mois lunaires, les autres ceux des saisons et des ans auxquels président certains signes du Zodiaque), et toutes s'inscrivent dans le cadre de cycles beaucoup plus vastes ; à un moment donné, le « philosophe », pour observer le monde des astres, s'oriente vers le Capricorne ; les temples sont bâtis spécialement pour un jour de fête placé sous l'égide d'un signe du Zodiaque, et l'on mange la nourriture ou porte les vêtements qui correspondent à ce signe).

Plus donc qu'un culte néo-platonicien, on pourrait y voir un culte pythagoricien (1) ou hermétique.

Mais, à ma connaissance, aucun texte grec connu ne décrit de telles cérémonies. Or, comme les Iḫwān ignorent l'évolution des sociétés et, qu'à leurs yeux, les Sabéens sont des Grecs dont les mœurs sont identiques à celles de la Grèce antique, il est permis de penser, comme l'a fait Corbin, que ces cérémonies et

(1) Car si Pythagore fut le fondateur de l'astronomie scientifique, les pythagoriciens furent aussi les initiateurs du culte astral en Grèce.

ce culte sont sabéens et que c'est chez ceux-ci que les Iḫwān les ont vus.

Mais il y a autre chose qui appuie cette idée et lui confère à mon sens un intérêt tout particulier. Les Iḫwān remarquent que les fêtes légales « extérieures » (et non philosophiques) de l'Islam (Fête de rupture du jeûne, Fête du sacrifice, Naissance du Prophète et, plus spécialement pour les šī'ites, *'ašūrā*) ont un sens profond et symbolisent quelque chose de particulièrement important : à savoir le passage d'un cycle à un autre, inauguré par un Adam et le passage progressif au cycle de la clandestinité (d'où le caractère de deuil qui empreint la 4e fête »), que ce soit au niveau de la vie totale de l'univers ou au niveau du grand cycle où nous vivons, ces cycles étant symbolisés à leur tour par les cycles plus courts qu'ils renferment : ceux de la vie (de la naissance à la mort du corps), des ans, des saisons, des mois et des jours (le jour et la nuit) (1).

Il est donc permis de penser que ces fêtes constituaient aux yeux des Sabéens le même symbole ou un symbole analogue ; peut-être représentaient-elles, pour eux aussi, la succession des grands cycles du monde où la vie s'arrête à la fin d'un cycle, puis recommence au début du suivant, chaque cycle étant inauguré, on l'a vu, par un être « composé de la pureté des éléments, doué d'un tempérament aux dispositions parfaites », et qui constitue le principal aspect ici-bas de l'incarnation de Dieu dans le monde ; bref, la remontée des âmes cherchant à échapper à la réincarnation (que les Iḫwān pour leur part, on le sait, n'acceptent pas). Mais sans doute, par dessous cette interprétation pythagoricienne ou orphique (2), faut-il voir une survivance de l'ancien culte lunaire de Ḥarrān, d'autant plus que certaines de ces cérémonies suivent *les mois lunaires*.

En effet, parmi d'autres jours fériés (et jours fastes et néfastes) de moindre importance, il y en avait, dans le mois babylonien, trois essentiels (3), et surtout sans doute à Ḥarrān : c'étaient les jours consacrés à la lune : le 1er jour du mois, la

(1) Cf. Corbin, *Rituel sabéen...*
(2) La notion de cycles elle-même vient de l'astrologie babylonienne.
(3) Cf. Dhorme, *op. cit.*, 234.

nouvelle lune *(arḫum ; askaru = hilāl)* ; le 15 du mois (*Šapatum*, à l'origine du « sabat » hébreu) ; le 28e ou le 29e du mois (en sumérien *ud-ná-a* = le jour du coucher), suivi du jour de la disparition (le dernier du mois) consacré à Nusku, dieu du feu *(bubbulu)*. La veille au soir de ces jours était une vigile *(nubaltu ;* infinitif : *bātu ;* en arabe : *bāta)*, où s'effectuaient offices et offrandes (cf. le repas du « philosophe » [= astrologue] sabéen et de ses disciples, repas de communion avec les dieux). Et l'on comprend que la « triple Hécate » (sous le nom de Gorgone) ait pu si facilement être adoptée par les Ḥarrāniens.

Voilà pour ce qui concerne les trois fêtes mensuelles. Dans les quatre fêtes annuelles, les cycles sont symbolisés par celui des saisons. Sans doute la cérémonie d'initiation décrite dans le premier extrait d'une part, et les festivités de Nīsān d'autre part, sont-elles deux de ces fêtes. J'ai déjà identifié la fête de Nīsān, fête du jour de l'an chez les Sabéens de Ḥarrān, à celle des anciens Babyloniens ; son prolongement, la procession de Kāḏī, correspondant à celle de l'*akītu* ; chez les anciens Babyloniens, une autre fête analogue existait en Tišrīt : c'était donc la fête de l'automne ; mais il est vraisemblable que dans un centre de culte astral comme Ḥarrān ait existé, dès une époque reculée, une fête inaugurant chacune des deux autres saisons (1).

Certes les diverses fêtes ḥarrāniennes ont pu absorber les fêtes mithriaques (mal connues, mais on sait qu'il y avait le 25 décembre une fête de la renaissance du soleil, le Noël des

(1) Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, IX, chap. II, dans Chwolson, II, texte I) donne une description détaillée des fêtes ḥarrāniennes et des sacrifices qui les accompagnaient ; elle aussi mériterait une étude critique ; les Iḫwān ne donnent de ces fêtes (à leurs yeux celles de la plus ancienne législation révélée) qu'une description synthétique, mais qui dénote, outre de la sympathie et de l'impartialité, une connaissance beaucoup plus précise de leur signification profonde. Néanmoins, Ibn al-Nadīm permet peut-être d'identifier les quatre fêtes annuelles mentionnées par les Iḫwān : 1) Celle du 8 avril (Nīsān) qui s'adresse aux sept dieux, aux démons, aux djinns et aux esprits (la cérémonie d'initiation qu'ils décrivent aurait lieu à ce moment) ; 2) celle du 15 juillet (Tammūz) et qui est la fête du dieu Tammūz ;
3) celle du 15 octobre (Tišrīt) qui est la fête des morts et où l'on donne des os pour le chien de la « Nocive » (d'Hécate, Proserpine-Ereškigal), c'est-à-dire pour Cerbère.
4) celle du 24 janvier (Arah samnu), fête de la Nativité du « Seigneur », c'est-à-dire de la lune.

chrétiens), isiaques (quatre fêtes en mars et avril dont l'une le 5 mars célébrait la fin de la mauvaise saison), ainsi que celles de Cybèle. Elles ont pu absorber en outre les anciens mystères grecs, y compris les plus anciens (peut-être d'origine pélagique) : ceux d'Éleusis. Le mythe, qui en faisait l'objet, était celui de la descente périodique de Coré-Perséphone (assimilable à la « triple Hécate ») auprès d'Hadès, et de sa remontée à la lumière pour rejoindre Déméter, sa mère. La descente symbolisait l'hiver ; la remontée symbolisait la germination. Mais le mythe représentait aussi la succession perpétuelle de la mort et de la vie ; et le destin de l'homme après la mort était comparé à la graine qui donne naissance à une plante nouvelle, symbole qui se perpétuera et que nous retrouvons jusque chez les Iḫwān.

Les petits mystères (première initiation) célébrés à Agra, avaient lieu le 20 du mois d'Anthestérion (février) et célébraient la germination, tandis que les grands mystères (deux autres initiations) qui célébraient la descente, se situaient lors des semailles, au mois de Boédromion (septembre). Plus tard, sous l'influence de l'orphisme et des Égyptiens, devait être introduit en outre dans le mythe Dionysos-Zagreus, assimilé à Osiris.

Quoiqu'il en soit, le fond des fêtes sabéennes de Ḥarrān reste manifestement babylonien.

LE SYNCRÉTISME ḤARRANIEN

Le mélange de races (Babyloniens hellénisés et Grecs babylonisés, les uns et les autres parlant syriaque, mais sachant fort bien le grec et se considérant comme Grecs) aurait favorisé le syncrétisme religieux, comme le syncrétisme de la pensée.

Les Ḥarrāniens auraient accueilli avec d'autant plus d'enthousiasme le pythagorisme et le platonisme qu'ils y retrouvaient les éléments que, sans le savoir, ils avaient eux-mêmes en tant que Chaldéens apporté aux Grecs quelques siècles auparavant. Ils auraient surtout accueilli l'astrologie hermétique dont ils ignoraient avoir été les initiateurs, constatant qu'elle concordait avec la leur, tout en y apportant quelques éléments nouveaux, et, du même coup, ils auraient adopté la philosophie hermétique qui,

malgré sa faiblesse, était toute imbue des philosophies grecques antérieures et avait en outre le caractère d'une révélation, un cachet prophétique. Ils seraient donc devenus hermétistes en faisant d'Hermès un prophète, sans doute assimilé à un personnage de l'ancienne mythologie babylonienne (1), et auraient reporté sur Hermès des légendes relatives à Hénoch, à Pythagore (notamment son ascension dans les sphères célestes, bien que ne niant pas celle de Pythagore) et, peut-être même à d'autres personnages comme Orphée (inconnu des Iḫwān). Plus tard, ils auraient adopté aussi de rares éléments néo-platoniciens.

Devenus hermétistes, les Ḥarrāniens n'ont pas hésité à mettre sous le nom d'Hermès des textes appartenant à leur patrimoine traditionnel. En effet, les Iḫwān donnent trois références à Hermès qui ne font que préluder à de longs extraits astrologiques et magiques (2) tirés d'ouvrages « hermétiques ». L'un au moins existe par ailleurs dans un manuscrit arabe ; l'autre probablement en un manuscrit latin (vraisemblablement traduit de l'arabe) ; et j'ai des raisons de croire que ce dernier ouvrage a été écrit non en grec mais en syriaque. En outre, j'espère pouvoir montrer dans une prochaine étude que l'un de ces textes au moins est issu d'un prototype babylonien (3). Cela m'amène aux remarques suivantes : à côté de la littérature magique authentiquement hermétique (relative notamment à l'alchimie), qu'ils tenaient des Grecs, les Ḥarrāniens avaient hérité de leurs ancêtres babyloniens d'un important patrimoine de textes

(1) Adapa ou Etana (tous deux montés au ciel) ? Ou plutôt Enmeduranki (cf. Martin, *Le livre d'Hénoch*, introd., page CII, et *Textes rel. ass. et bab.*, 232 et ss.) que Šamaš et Adad ont introduit dans leur société et auquel ils ont confié le secret d'Anu, d'Enlil (Bel) et d'Ea, la tablette des dieux et le sachet de cuir de l'oracle des cieux et de la terre, et qui devint instructeur des « voyants » (Bārū). Il est le septième roi babylonien avant le déluge, comme Hénoch est le septième patriarche depuis Adam.

(2) Dont je me réserve de reparler dans une prochaine étude.

(3) Plessner l'a déjà signalé (dans *Studia Islamica*, II (1954), 57-8).

Il note également (55) que l'origine des histoires arabes sur Hermès est babylonienne, mais pense que la source est à en chercher dans des textes grecs, ce que je ne crois pas.

Il cite (57) un texte d'Abu Ma'šar al-Falakī fort instructif qui nous apprend qu'il y a sur Hermès deux courants de légendes : égyptien et babylonien. Voilà comment, nous dit-il, « un mythe babylonien essentiel a été transporté sur le sol égyptien ».

astrologico-magiques vraisemblablement transposés, vers le IIIe siècle avant J.-C., de l'akkadien en araméen (langue étroitement apparentée à l'akkadien), ou peut-être parfois en grec. Il est probable qu'il en reste d'importants vestiges dans la littérature arabe (1), et c'est là, qu'à mon avis, il faut chercher l'origine du texte d'ornithomancie attribué à Jāḥiẓ et cité par Nuwayrī dans sa *Nihāya* (III, 1930, pp. 130-132) que Fahd (dans *Arabica*, VIII, 1961) a eu l'heureuse idée de confronter à un texte akkadien analogue ; il en est probablement de même du *Āyin Nāmah* traduit du persan par Ibn al-Muqaffa', que cite le même auteur ; car si les Perses ont influencé les Mésopotamiens, la réciproque est encore plus vraie. Le syncrétisme ḥarrānien est donc vaste et profond.

Il est probable aussi que beaucoup d'écrits astrologiques d'inspiration plus ou moins hermétique, dont on ne possède pas de prototype grec, sont en réalité dus aux Ḥarrāniens ; il ne serait pas étonnant, par exemple, que l'*Épître de la Pomme* attribuée à Aristote (citée par les Iḫwān, IV, 35 et IV, 271) (2), qui se caractérise par une allure très hermétique, presque ismaïlienne, soit en réalité un faux ḥarrānien, destiné à mettre en valeur le « monothéisme » d'Aristote.

Ainsi s'éclaire le rôle joué par des savants ḥarrāniens du genre de Ṯābit b. Qurra (3) ; ils ont été comme les ambassadeurs itinérants du sabéïsme, dans le but de mettre en valeur le mérite et la vertu de leur doctrine, comme sans doute aussi les savants juifs et chrétiens ont pu être les ambassadeurs de leurs religions respectives. Mais, pour les Ḥarrāniens, c'était une question de vie ou de mort ; et l'on peut penser qu'ils ont joué dans la diffusion des œuvres grecques un rôle plus important encore que les Syriens chrétiens, même s'ils ont mis l'accent sur leur apport astrologico-magique (d'origine surtout babylonienne) dont le

(1) Que l'on songe par exemple à *al-filāḥatu l-nabaṭiyya* traduite par Ibn al-Waḥšiyya.

(2) Il en existe à la B. N. de Paris deux manuscrits en latin et un en hébreu.

(3) Corbin a insisté sur le rôle important qu'ils ont joué dans la transmission de l'hellénisme (*Hist. phil. islam.*, 34). Al-Qifṭī (dans Chwolson, II, 532) dit : Ṯābit b. Qurra a inauguré la mission de propagande *(da'wa)* des Sabéens en Irak et à la cour des califes ; alors leur situation s'affermit ; leur échelon s'éleva, et ils firent preuve de talent.

caractère soi-disant utilitaire s'imposait aux esprits comme le médecin au malade.

LE SYNCRÉTISME DES IḪWĀN

Dès lors, l'origine de la doctrine ismaïlienne s'éclaire, et l'on conçoit mieux le syncrétisme des Iḫwān. Ils ne l'auraient pas élaboré entièrement eux-mêmes ; ils se seraient bornés à adopter le système sabéen dans ses grandes lignes, et le syncrétisme des Iḫwān fut, par le canal des Ḥarrāniens, le prolongement du syncrétisme hellénistique. Mais ils auraient eu recours à des éléments néo-platoniciens plus nombreux pour rendre la doctrine plus rigoureuse et plus homogène, plus unitaire, et lui permettre de cadrer avec les grandes religions monothéistes et essentiellement avec l'Islam.

Les Sabéens de Ḥarrān, en effet, ont d'abord transmis aux Iḫwān l'astrologie, dont les principes avaient été soi-disant révélés, dès le cycle d'Adam, au « prophète » Hermès ; et ils réussissaient à leur faire admttre la légitimité de cet emprunt en les persuadant, à l'aide des écrits « philosophiques » hermétiques (la *Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*) et du livre d'Hénoch qu'Hermès avait réellement été prophète, qui plus est, un prophète mentionné par le Coran, Idrīs, ce qui du même coup expliquait l'indulgence du Coran à l'égard des « Sabéens » ; et les Iḫwān transmirent aux autres musulmans l'identification Hermès-Idrīs.

Cela permet aussi de comprendre pourquoi, malgré leur esprit profond, les Iḫwān adoptèrent la soi-disant « philosophie » hermétique ; elle était à leurs yeux une révélation ésotérique ; mais elle était illustrée par la doctrine sabéenne que les Ḥarrāniens ne se sont pas fait faute de leur exposer et, qui plus est, il suffisait de l'interpréter, à l'instar des Ḥarrāniens, à l'aide des œuvres de la philosophie grecque, que ces mêmes Ḥarrāniens n'ont pas manqué de leur fournir, et le cas échéant de leur commenter. Cela ne présentait aucun danger, car l'*imām*, armé de la Loi musulmane et qui plus est soutenu par Dieu, pouvait mener cette interprétation beaucoup mieux que les Ḥarrāniens

eux-mêmes (ce qui explique à la fois la fondamentale similitude et aussi les points de divergence profonde entre les deux doctrines).

Du même coup, on peut se demander si l'*imām* Ismā'īl n'a pas été dépossédé par son père, non pas tant à cause de son goût pour la philosophie, qu'en raison de son indulgence et de son intérêt à l'égard des autres religions, et notamment du Sabéïsme. Cette indulgence et cet intérêt, ayant la caution de cet *imām*, seraient devenus de règle chez les Iḫwān, ce qui expliquerait que les Ḥarrāniens leur aient dévoilé des aspects très cachés de leur doctrine et de leur religion, les laissant même assister à certaines de leurs cérémonies et de leurs mystères. Car si, dans le texte traduit au début de cette étude, les Iḫwān n'exposent à dessein que les grandes lignes de la doctrine sabéenne, on constate qu'ils la connaissent beaucoup plus profondément que Šahrastānī. A celui-ci sans doute, les Ḥarrāniens n'ont laissé connaître de leur doctrine que ce qu'ils ne pouvaient cacher, et ce qui était indispensable à la controverse, et leur position à l'égard de l'orthodoxie restait défensive. Il me semble vraisemblable aussi que les Iḫwān n'aient pas voulu donner un exposé détaillé de la doctrine sabéenne pour les raisons suivantes :

1) Ils ne veulent pas exposer les Sabéens, qu'ils estiment, à la vindicte de musulmans non initiés, et surtout des fanatiques ; au contraire, ils cherchent à les rendre sympathiques.

2) Ils ne veulent pas choquer ces mêmes non initiés.

3) Dans le même ordre d'idée, ils ne veulent pas montrer ce qu'ils doivent à cette religion, suspecte aux yeux de ces mêmes gens ; ils ne peuvent le faire que devant des initiés capables de comprendre la légitimité de ces emprunts.

Tout ce qui précède me semble appuyé par le petit nombre des références à Hermès que l'on trouve dans les Iḫwān (alors que *dans le domaine « scientifique »* ils se réfèrent à des philosophes auxquels ils doivent beaucoup moins), et aussi par le caractère de ces références (la même remarque s'applique d'ailleurs aux références à la Thora et aux évangiles ainsi qu'aux philosophes). On ne trouve en effet dans les Épitres que huit références à Hermès (je ne compte pas l'« intercession idrīsite » mentionnée en IV, 264). Celles que j'ai citées plus haut (I, 226, II, 231, III,

502) consistent uniquement en légendes, relatives à Hermès prophète, et notamment à son ascension dans le monde des sphères. Une seule renvoie de façon précise aux écrits hermétiques philosophiques : le *Cratère* ou la *Monade* (I, 297) ; je l'ai déjà citée (1), en indiquant qu'elle est une des sources à laquelle ont puisé les Iḫwān pour leur conception de l'*imām* (là encore se décèle l'influence ḥarrānienne).

Les trois dernières références, je l'ai dit tout à l'heure, ne font que préluder à de longs extraits de textes « hermétiques », astrologiques et magiques. Par contre, les innombrables idées empruntées, tout au long des épîtres, aux écrits hermétiques philosophiques ne font pas l'objet de références. Il semble donc que les Iḫwān n'hésitent pas à mettre en valeur l'apport hermétique qu'ils considèrent comme purement scientifique, qu'ils n'hésitent pas non plus à affirmer la mission prophétique d'Hermès ; par contre, ils évitent de dévoiler ce qu'ils doivent à la doctrine hermétique et ḥarrānienne et qui a un caractère trop religieux.

Malgré ce qui sépare la doctrine des Iḫwān de celle des Ḥarrāniens, la première est tributaire de la seconde dans tous ses aspects, et constitue une islamisation du Sabéïsme ou une « sabéïsation » de l'Islam, justifiant l'annonce faite par Yazīd b. Ubaysa de la venue imminente du « véritable sabéïsme », non celui de Wāṣiṭ et de Ḥarrān, qui devait absorber l'Islam et réconcilier toutes les sectes (2).

Cela explique que les Iḫwān, bien qu'ils n'aient pas adopté le culte astral et qu'ils aient fortement réduit le rôle de la magie astrologique, continuent à considérer celle-ci comme le sommet des sciences et de la philosophie sous prétexte qu'elle prouve la légitimité de leur doctrine de l'imāmat et de la royauté. Cette idée, ils la tenaient aussi des Ḥarrāniens qui, descendants des

(1) Dans *Imāmat...*, 75.

(2) Cf. Massignon, *Lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*, d'après Šahrastānī, I, 183. Al-Nuwayrī (*Nihāya*, chap. IX, 3e section, 5e volume, dans Chwolson, 626, traduction de Sacy) donne le texte d'une instruction distribuée aux *du'āt* ismaïliens : « ...Entre tous les peuples, les mages et les Sabéens sont ceux qui ont le plus de rapports avec nous et dont la doctrine approche le plus de la nôtre ; mais faute de la bien connaître, ils y ont introduit quelques erreurs... ».

Babyloniens, continuaient à donner la primauté à leurs sciences traditionnelles, astrologie et magie.

Cette entreprise de syncrétisme était parfaitement consciente chez les Iḫwān puisqu'ils explicitent l'idée que l'Islam ne fait que prendre à son compte l'apport des communautés et législations précédentes. Ce qu'ils ignoraient, c'est que le fond de ce syncrétisme était babylonien. Ils ont retrouvé sans le savoir la vieille tradition sémitique (proto-arabe, aurait dit Dussaud) à travers les Grecs. S'ils ont si facilement accepté cette doctrine, c'est d'abord que les Sabéens affirmaient être des monothéistes mentionnés dans le Coran, ajoutant probablement que les noms des dieux étaient des symboles destinés au vulgaire, mais ayant valeur magique ; c'est peut-être aussi, sans parler du caractère fascinant de la pensée grecque, qu'ils avaient confusément le sentiment d'une affinité entre leur culture arabe et ces antiques conceptions (1).

Yves MARQUET
(Dakar)

(1) En admettant que le nom de Sabéens ait été décerné aux Mandéens avec le sens de « baptistes » (*E.I.*, art. Ḥarrān), ce qui me paraît une interprétation forcée, car il faut alors admettre la mutation de ' en ', on peut penser que les Ḥarrāniens avaient une raison linguistique valable de s'attribuer cette dénomination, qui leur assurait en même temps la caution du Coran. Selon Šahrastānī, ils prétendaient que le mot signifiait « se défaire des entraves humaines ». Je n'oserais proposer comme origine de cette assimilation des expressions hébraïques tirées de la racine *ṣb'* (existant en akkadien : *ṣabē* = soldats), telles *ṣᵉvā' haššamaīm*, « armée céleste », ou *ṣive'ei Yahveh* « armées de Dieu », désignant les anges (ou les astres). Peut-être faut-il chercher dans le syriaque ou le grec : on peut songer à la même racine *ṣb'* dans le sens de vouloir, désirer (akkadien *ṣibū*) : on aurait alors dans le participe syriaque de ce verbe un équivalent du mot arabe *murīd*, initié. On peut évoquer aussi le participe du verbe grec *sebomaī : oī sebomenoī* signifierait alors « ceux qui rendent un culte (à Dieu) ».

Il pourrait s'agir aussi de *oī Saboī*, les initiés au culte de Sabazios, puisque ce dieu, après avoir d'abord fait l'objet d'un culte de type bachique, avait fini par être confondu avec Mèn, Mithra, Apollon, et le *Yahveh ṣevā'ōt*ʰ des Juifs.

Tous ces mots auraient pu d'ailleurs intervenir simultanément. Les deux participes (syriaque et grec) concordent en tout cas assez bien avec le sens donné par Šahrastānī. C'est là une hypothèse que je propose timidement, me rendant compte de sa fragilité.

Il est également permis de penser que la « pensée » alchimique d'Occident tire sa source du même syncrétisme égyptien, babylonien et hellénistique, parce que l'Occident a reçu l'essentiel de cet héritage des arabes, *qui eux-mêmes le tenaient en majeure partie des hermétistes ḥarrāniens.*

Ainsi s'explique, à mon sens, l'étroite affinité qui existe entre la pensée d'un Paracelse ou des « Frères de la Rose-Croix », et celle des « Frères de la Pureté ».

PHILOSOPHICAL TERMS AS A CRITERION OF AUTHENTICITY IN THE WRITINGS OF AL-GHAZZĀLĪ

In spite of the vast amount of literature which accumulated during the last hundred years out of the research in Al-Ghazzālī's writings and the study of his ideas and doctrines, we still do not know the answers to some of the most basic questions which arise with regard to this most influential thinker of Islam. We have not yet established a reliable canon of his writings, we have almost no scholarly editions of his books, we do not know whether he maintained an esoteric (heretic?) doctrine, contradictory to his teachings for the masses, we do not know which were all his sources of inspiration and to what extent he copied from other authors before him and so on.

Most scholars agree that the establishment of a reliable canon of Al-Ghazzālī's authentic books according to their chronological order is the major prerequisite for research on his writings, his ideas and his influence on the development of Islam after his death. A number of new attempts have recently been made in that direction and at least two books have appeared, in which their authors try to sum up all established facts regarding the questions of authenticity and chronology in Al-Ghazzālī's writings (1). I have spent several years trying to deal with the

(1) M. Bouyges, *Essai de Chronologie des Œuvres de Al-Ghazālī* (ed. par M. Allard, Beyrouth 1959); A. Badawī, *Les Œuvres d'Al-Ghazālī; étude bibliographique* (in Arabic; Le Caire 1961). See also: G. F. Hourani, *The Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings*, JAOS 79, 1959, pp. 225-233; W. M. Watt, *The Authenticity of the Works*

same questions in a different way. I tried to apply some of the methods of Western philological and literary criticism to Arabic literature, especially to the writings of Al-Ghazzālī. The difficulties involved in this kind of attempt are enormous and many adaptations have to be made, yet there is no doubt that through some of these methods we can achieve better results, or at least more carefully grounded results, in determining for instance the authenticity (or falseness) of some of the books attributed to Al-Ghazzālī. I shall try to give one, quite important, example of this in this paper (1).

A very simple linguistic fact brought me to a closer scrutiny of Al-Ghazzālī's use of philosophical terms. The fact is this: the common medieval philosophical terms (mostly Neoplatonic, but to a certain extent also Aristotelian) such as *'Uqūl*, *'Aql kullī*, *Nafs kulliyya*, *'Aql fa"āl*, *'Aql hayūlānī*, *Mādda* etc.—are entirely absent from those books of Al-Ghazzālī, which scholars have accepted as authentic books written by him. Only in those books of his which deal with the description or refutation of philosophical doctrines such as his *Maqāṣid*, *Tahāfut*, *Miḥakk al-Naẓar*, *Mi'yār al-'Ilm* and to a lesser degree also in *Mīzān al-'Amal* (2), does this terminology appear and proves the well known fact that Al-Ghazzālī was well versed in philosophical doctrines and knew their technical terminology, better perhaps than any Muslim theologian before him. Yet here is this most astonishing linguistic fact that in a large number of his books,

attributed to al-Ghazālī, JRAS 1952, pp. 24-45 ; W. M. Watt, *The Study of Al-Ghazālī*, ORIENS 1961, pp. 121-124 and F. Jabre, *La Notion de la Certitude selon Ghazzālī* (Paris 1948), pp. 9-11.

(1) The present article is an adapted chapter of my unpublished Ph. D. thesis, entitled *The Literary Character of Al-Ghazzālī's Writings; studies in the language of Al-Ghazzālī*. The thesis was written in Hebrew at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, under the supervision of my teachers D. H. Baneth and M. Plessner, to both of whom this article is dedicated with gratitude. An outline of this article was delivered at the annual meeting of the A. O. S. in Philadelphia, in April 1966.

(2) All those books were apparently written before Al-Ghazzālī left Bagdad in 488/1091. The case of *Mīzān* is a most complicated one, a fact which accounts for the great divergence of opinions with regard to the date of this book and even with regard to the authenticity of most important parts of it. It seems that a thorough literary study of this book will be able to show that it belongs, as a whole, to the transitory period of Al-Ghazzālī from the world of philosophy to the "taṣawwuf", and as such must have been written towards the end of his stay in Bagdad.

including his major works, there is nowhere any use of any philosophical term, even when Al-Ghazzālī deals with typical metaphysical subjects and not in the usual orthodox way (1). These books include among others the *Mustaẓhirī* (*Kitāb Faḍā'iḥ al-Bāṭiniyya*, partly edited by Goldziher in his well known *Streitschrift des Ġazālī*... and now fully edited by A. Badawi, Cairo 1964), *Kitāb al-Iqtiṣād*, the *Iḥyā'*, *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā*, *Bidāyat al-Hidāya*, *Djawāhir al-Qur'ān*, *Kitāb al Arba'īn*, *Al-Qusṭās al-Mustaqīm*, *Fayṣal al-Tafriqa*, *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, *Al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, *Kitāb al-Mustaṣfā*, *Kitāb al-Imlā'* and *Ildjām al-'Awāmm*. All these books, which have been mentioned here (with their abridged titles only) in their assumed chronological order, from the end of Al-Ghazzālī's stay in Bagdad and until his death, are unanimously accepted as authentic books of Al-Ghazzālī. Only with regards to parts of the *Iḥyā'* and the last part of *Mishkāt al-Anwār* doubts have been raised (2). Nevertheless there can be little doubt that the above list represents at least a very important part of Al-Ghazzālī's authentic books, written mainly during his decisive Sufi period; yet containing different kinds of books, a fact which is of especial importance, as the absence of philosophical terms in the "Sufi books" only, would have been a much less extraordinary phenomenon. This list could be supplemented by a number of other books of Al-Ghazzālī, which also do not contain any traces of the common philosophical terminology. But on account of their specific linguistic characteristics such as the books dealing with Fiqh, short epistles, books written in Persian etc., I have avoided doing so.

(1) Sometimes Al-Ghazzālī even expresses philosophical ideas in traditional terms like the philosophers. I shall not deal with this most interesting phenomenon in this paper, as my approach here is a literary-critical one only.

(2) For parts of the *Iḥyā'* copied out literally from other books see, for instance, M. Plessner, *Der Οἰκονομικός des Neuphytagoreers 'Bryson'* (Heidelberg 1928), pp. 131, 134. As for the end of *Mishkāt* see W. M. Watt in JRAS 1949, pp. 5-22. But in spite of the specific Neoplatonic contents of this chapter of the *Mishkāt* it does not deviate from Al-Ghazzālī's style throughout the book or from his manner of treating the same subject in other books. It would therefore seem that the attempts to fit this particular chapter into the frame of Al-Ghazzālī's thought have to be continued, since each of the solutions put forth as yet, presents its special difficulties.

It should be remarked here that though I deal mainly with philosophical terms concerned with metaphysics, the same holds true for other philosophical disciplines too, such as logic. It is a well known fact that Al-Ghazzālī tried to promulgate this science as well as mathematics and others among the masses and fought the prejudice of the theologians against these sciences. He even considered this prejudice to be a sin that endangers and weakens religion unnecessarily (1). There is no doubt that Al-Ghazzālī was fascinated by the science of logic and therefore dealt with it in many books. In fact the radical change which occured in the Ash'arite theology with the formal admittance of logic into its sphere, is to a certain extent due to Al-Ghazzālī's influence (2). Yet while he still used the commonly accepted terminology of this science in early books of his, like the *Mi'yār* and the *Miḥakk*, he seems to discard it completely from the *Iqtiṣād* on and up to the *Mustaṣfā* which must have been written towards the end of his life. Especially illuminating in this respect is the *Qusṭās*. It deals with the most basic problems of logic, yet nowhere in this book any technical term is used (3). Even more so, Al-Ghazzālī explains his methods in a very explicit way in this book: due to the reader's simple mind and due to his susceptibility to external things Al-Ghazzālī will « descend » to him and talk to him in the manner of a physician who ministers a potion in a water jug without telling his patient that it is a medicine (*Qusṭās*, p. 59 ff.).

On the other hand we find a large number of books attributed

(1) In this connection the expression "Ṣadīq Djāhil" recurs in Al-Ghazzālī's writings because he believed that only a "Foolish Friend" of religion would forbid the study of these sciences, thus causing more harm than good. 1. Goldziher has already mentioned this expression in his *Streitschrift des Ġazālī*, p. 19 n. 2. To the examples listed by him one can add *Tahāfut* (éd. M. Bouyges 1927), p. 11; *Al-Qusṭās Al-Mustaqīm* (no date and place of print), p. 16; *Al-Munqidh* (5th Syrian edition), pp. 75, 78. Only towards the end of his life Al-Ghazzālī began to realize some of the dangers which these sciences might present to the faith of common people, in spite of their having no direct bearing on religious problems. See *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 84-85, 86-87.

(2) Gardet-Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane* (Paris 1948), p. 148ff; D. B. Macdonald, *Life of Al-Ghazzālī*, JAOS, XX, 1899, p. 122.

(3) This fact was pointed out by G. F. Hourani in the discussion at the above mentioned annual meeting of the A.O.S.

to Al-Ghazzālī, the authenticity of each of which has been contested by various scholars on different grounds, regardless of the use of terminology (1) and usually also regardless of language and style as such. In all of these books appears the use of the widespread medieval philosophical terminology whenever metaphysical subjects are dealt with. Books like these are for instance *Al-Risāla al-Laduniyya*, *Al-Maḍnūn al-Ṣaghīr*, *Ma'āridj al-Quds*, *Mi'rādj al-Sālikīn*, *Al-Ma'ārif al 'Aqliyya* (2) and the book which is preserved only in its Hebrew translation, "Abu Hamid's answer on questions he was asked", (edited, with a reconstruction of the Arabic text, by H. Malter, Berlin 1894, Frankfurt 1896). One may add to this list also other books, which contain the same terminology but in a less conspicious and less professional way such as *Rauḍat al-Ṭālibīn*, *Al-Maḍnūn bihi 'alā ghair Ahlih* (or *Al- Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*) and others (3).

Now with regard to all of these books it is very difficult to maintain that Al-Ghazzālī did use in them the accepted terminology because he expounded in them his philosophical esoteric ideas. The books are really not of the same feather and not one of them has attained a suitable standard and sufficient depth (4) for a book purporting to contain the esoteric ideas of a man, who wrote then, allegedly for the masses, such books as the *Iḥyā'*, *Al-Maqṣad*, *Djawāhir*, and *Mishkāt*. On the contrary, it can be shown, and with regard to some of those books various scholars have done so, that most of these books are nothing but compilations of passages, copied out from both Al-Ghazzālī's authentic books as well as from the writings of great philosophers like Ibn Sīnā and others (5). In fact much

(1) Yet see D. H. Baneth's remarks in his *Rabbi Yehuda Hallevi and Al-Ghazzālī* (in Hebrew) KNESSET 7, 1942, esp. p. 317 n. 5.

(2) Part of this book has been published by D. Cabanelas in AL-ANDALUS, XXI, 1958, pp. 19-58. The whole book has been recently edited by Abdel-Karim Uthman, Damascus, 1963. In his introduction the editor stresses the great similarity between this book and *Ma'āridj al-Quds*.

(3) See Bouyges and Badawi for each one of these books.

(4) Most of them seem to be just "Textbooks of Philosophy", as G. F. Hourani put it in the same discussion.

(5) See for instance: A. S. Tritton, *Notes and Communications*, BSOAS 22, 1929, p. 353.

more eccentric esoteric ideas of Al-Ghazzālī are expressed or hinted at in his accepted authentic books, including the *Iḥyā'* itself (1), yet without the use of any technical terms.

It might of course be argued that all these books are authentic and were written by Al-Ghazzālī in an early stage of his career, perhaps before the *Maqāṣid.* Yet even if this far-fetched idea is accepted, it would not contradict my main contention in any essential way, since the books will therefore be of no consequence to the study of Al-Ghazzālī's thought which developed from the composition of the *Tahāfut* until the day of his death. The books will then have but biographical value. Furthermore this argument is invalid with regard to some of these books, since they contain pronounced Sufi elements, such as *Al-Risāla al-Laduniyya* and *Rauḍat al-Ṭālibīn.*

To this we have to add the factor of various repetitions of Al-Ghazzālī's statement in his books that he is interested in the contents, the ideas *(ma'ānī)* rather than in the correct expressions *(alfāẓ)* of his writings (2), and he seems to include technical terminology *(iṣṭilāḥ)* among the latter. Already in his introduction to the *Tahāfut* he mentions that he will use in this book technical terminology only for addressing his philosophical opponents in order to impress them with his own mastery of and familiarity with their subject. Later on, however, he developed a certain contempt for accurate terminology, maintaining that fastidiousness of expression distracts the reader's attention from the intrinsic, real meaning *(ḥaqā'iq)* of the contents. This professed contempt of form might, of course, be easily misconstrued as apologetics for Al-Ghazzālī's own inconsistent and inaccurate language (3), yet I believe there is much more to

(1) There might be different layers in the *Iḥyā'* meant for different readers of it, in somewhat the same manner as great scholars believe Maimonides to have done in his *Guide of the Perplexed,* yet much less methodically arranged. See L. Strauss, *How to begin to study the Guide of the Perplexed,* in S. Pines (transl.), Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed* (Chicago 1953).

(2) The common confrontation of "al-Ma'ānī" with "al-Alfāẓ", which is well known from Arabic rhetorics and other fields of study, is closely associated with the Platonic "idea" concept. It should be noted that Platonic concepts as such play an important role in Al-Ghazzālī's thought.

(3) See the accusations against Al-Ghazzālī in this direction in Al-Subkī's

it than plain apologetics. Al-Ghazzālī maintained that a multitude of variegated expressions tends to mislead people and prevents them from grasping the truth, while plain and lucid language facilitates understanding. Words to this effect appear in many of Al-Ghazzālī's books, beginning towards the end of his Baghdad period and they abound with the passage of years. They are put in the same language, with repetitions of the same expressions of wonder, the same examples and generalizations (1). Thus while discussing the meaning of such terms as Intelligence, Soul, and Inner Eye, Al-Ghazzālī asks his reader to forget any terminology (and in fact discards not only philosophical terms but in this case the Sufi ones as well) which tends to confuse the issue. He announces that he will use the common language only: "Know then that there is in the mind of man an eye... which is variously called Intelligence, Spirit, Human Soul. But we pass over these terms, for the multiplicity of terms deludes the man of small intelligence into imagining a corresponding multiplicity of ideas. We mean simply that by which the rational man is distinguished from the infant in arms, from the brute beast and from the lunatic. Let us call it "the Intelligence", following the current terminology" (2).

We may as well assume that by choosing this non-technical language Al-Ghazzālī hoped not only to avoid misconceptions but also to extend the range of his public, to include readers from all walks of life, even those who were quick to put a suspicion of heresy on users of philosophical terms as well as those who could not understand them.

It seems to me therefore that those books attributed to Al-Ghazzālī in which the philosophical terminology appears

Ṭabaqāt, IV, p. 110. M. Bouyges in the introduction to his edition of the *Tahāfut* quotes later sources to the same effect. *Ibid.*, p. 26, n. 1.

(1) See *Tahāfut*, p. 39; *Mīzān* (Cairo, 1328), p. 66; *Al-Iqtiṣād* (Cairo edition, no date), p. 11; *Iḥyā'* I, 1, p. 152 (Cairo 1356/57; the Roman numeral denotes the relevant section of the work, while the Arabic numeral refers to the particular "book" in that section); *Mishkāt* (*Madjmū'a*, Cairo 1325), p. 45 et alias.

(2) According to W. H. T. Gairdner's translation (R.A.S. 1924), p. 83 (see the Arabic text in the above mentioned *Madjmū'a*, p. 33). This linguistic fact as well as Al-Ghazzālī's inconsistent non-technical language seem to have misled scholars like J. Obermann and W. M. Watt in some of their deductions from his writings.

should be considered as not having been written by him. It may well be that this linguistic approach leaves less room for doubts than any other approach to the matter. While Al-Ghazzālī could always have expressed new ideas, contradicting those he had outlined before (and even his accepted authentic books abound in contradictions and changes of opinion), it seems hardly conceivable that Al-Ghazzālī would change his linguistic habits entirely, while dealing with the same religious issues as before, even if he did express new and contradictory ideas. As a matter of fact stylistic research has shown that there is a surprising consistency throughout Al-Ghazzālī's language, which is a most interesting phenomenon, not only when considering the author, but also from the point of view of research into language as such. Thus it may be said, that contrary to the usually accepted opinion, profound changes in the life or thought of a man do not necessarily leave their mark on the language of that man.

However extreme scholarly caution is called for too. Never can any stylistic or linguistic feature be the sole criterion for determining the authorship of a book. Even more so in Al-Ghazzālī's case, where his ambivalent and changing attitude towards all fields of philosophy during his lifetime should be the subject of still more special studies and research work. I would therefore phrase, temporarily, my conclusion as follows:

Whenever the common philosophical terminology is found in one of Al-Ghazzālī's books, the authenticity of which has already been doubted and contested beforehand, this book should be considered as spurious.

This conclusion will necessarily arouse two main problems. The first and more important one can only be hinted at here: since the major part of research on Al-Ghazzālī hitherto has been based to a large extent on the above named suspect books (especially on *Al-Risāla al-Laduniyya*, *Ma'āridj al-Quds* and both *Al-Maḍnūn*) and even distinguished scholars such as Tj. de Boer, Suleiman Dunya, D. B. Macdonald, F. Rahman, W. M. Smith, A. J. Wensinck and R. C. Zaehner (1) have treated

(1) This holds true not only for books and papers written by these scholars and

of Al-Ghazzālī's doctrines on this basis, our conclusion will entail a totally new approach to the research of Al-Ghazzālī's personality and doctrine. This will be especially important with reference to the recurring doubt regarding his sincerity and his alleged philosophical teachings since the ideas which are particularly alien to those expressed in Al-Ghazzālī's authentic books, appear in those books which make also use of the common philosophical terminology (1).

The second problem will be the one dealing with this vast pseudo-Ghazzālian literature, which must have come into being very close to Al-Ghazzālī's death (505/1111), as Ibn Ṭufayl, the famous Western philosopher (died in 581/1185) already mentions some of these books as well as some of the authentic books of Al-Ghazzālī's in his *Ḥayy Ben Yaqdhān* (2). We all know about the widespread practice in the Middle Ages of hanging one's book on to a famous author in order to ensure its survival. Sometimes this was done also in order to discredit a famous author, as Goldziher and others have shown with regard to different writers. Macdonald, following Goldziher, supposes that this might have been done to Al-Ghazzālī too in one or two cases (3). But here we deal with many different books attributed to Al-Ghazzālī and it is hardly conceivable that all these authors (who must have been different persons as shown by the contents of the books as well as by the evidence of their

others, but for several general articles in the EI also (most of which have been written by the same authors). See for instance "Khalḳ" and "Faiḍ" (Suppl.) and the articles "Allāh" in the first and the second edition of the EI.

(1) Of course there will remain the problem of other books written by or attributed to Al-Ghazzālī, in which this terminology does not appear and yet it seems doubtful that they have been written by him. Most of these books call for special studies.

(2) See L. Gauthier, *Ḥayy Ben Yaqdhān* (Alger 1900), Arabic text p. 14ff. and French translation p. 13ff. Ibn Bājja (died 533/1139) seems to mention only Al-Ghazzālī's *Munqidh*. See Asin Palacios's edition and translation of the *Letter of Farewell*, AL-ANDALUS VIII, 1943, p. 21ff., p. 53f. Cf. also A. Altmann, *Ibn Bājja on Man's Ultimate Felicity*" in *H. A. Wolfson Jubilee Volume*, 1965, p. 69.

(3) See J. Goldziher, ZDMG 38, 1884, p. 681 and *Muham. Stud.* II, p. 373, n. 5, and D. B. Macdonald, *The Life of Al-Ghazāli*, JAOS XX, 1899, p. 131. See also J. Goldziher, *Streitschrift des Ġazālī...*, pp. 15-16.

language) tried to expose Al-Ghazzālī as suspect of philosophical heresy. On the contrary, the authors themselves were admirers of philosophy and did not conceal this fact in their writings.

Of course, each of these books, as well as all the others that will be found to belong the same category, has yet to be edited and studied carefully. Yet we may perhaps already at this point put forth the assumption that the authors of these books were some of Al-Ghazzālī's enthusiastic admirers who undertook the task of expounding his esoteric ideas in a manner which seemed to them appropriate. Al-Ghazzālī repeatedly mentions in his books that there are certain esoteric metaphysical subjects *(Maḍnūn bihā)* which should not be discussed too thoroughly in public. He expresses his hope that he might some day discuss them in a separate book (or books) of his, meant only for the intellectual and virtuous elite (1). Yet while he did incorporate esoteric ideas in most of his authentic Sufi books (2) it seems that he never wrote such a special work. It may therefore well be that some philosophical-religious thinkers, who failed to notice the discrepancy of their sources, tried to compile this book of his by mixing excerpts of Al-Ghazzālī's own books with parts copied out from books of philosophers, whom they admired no less than Al-Ghazzālī himself. The names of at least two of these books *(Al-Maḍnūn...)* seem to strengthen this assumption especially, as well as a short remark to the same effect at the end of a third book in the same list (3).

(1) See *Djawāhir* (Cairo 1329), p. 30; *Al-Arba'īn* (Cairo 1328) p. 27, *Faiṣal al-Tafriqa* (*Madjmū'a*, Cairo 1907), p. 6. The subjects which would be dealt with in this book belong to the esoteric "knowledge of Revelation" *('Ilm al-Mukāshafa)*. See my paper on *The place of the Religious Commandments in the Philosophy of Al-Ghazzālī*, MW 1961, p. 174.

(2) Such as *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā*, *Djawāhir al-Qur'ān*, *Mishkāt al-Anwār* and even the *Iḥyā'* (see note 1 above, p. 94). Ibn Tufayl discusses this problem in the above-mentioned passage (note 2, p. 119).

See p. 93 and n. 5 there.

(3) See *Ma'āridj al-Quds* (Cairo 1346), p. 210. See also the passage in Ibn Ṭufail's book, referred to above. Most interesting in this respect is the modern editor's note at the end of *Djawāhir al-Qur'ān* (Cairo 1329), p. 189. See also *Minhādj al-'Ābidīn* (? 1300), p. 3, although it does not belong to the "philosophical books" attributed to al-Ghazzālī.

This strange mixture of ideas, which is never to be found in Al-Ghazzālī's accepted authentic books, misled generations of readers and of scholars with regard to Al-Ghazzālī and engendered various theories of his belief in dual truths, his hypocrisy, illogicality, inconsistency and so on. By eliminating the doubtful books, which make use of the philosophical terminology, from the canon of his books we can once more come nearer to a true knowledge and understanding of this great man and his thought.

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ADDENDUM

P. 116, n. 1 : Cf. also G. F. Hourani, « Ibn Sina's Essay on the Secret of Destiny », BSOAS 29, 1966, pp. 25-48, esp. pp. 41 ff. ; N. R. Keddie, « Symbol and Sincerity in Islam », STUDIA ISLAMICA 19, 1963, pp. 27-66.

ÉTUDES DE PHILOSOPHIE MUSULMANE DU DROIT

II

L'« ÉQUITÉ » EN TANT QUE SOURCE DU DROIT HANAFITE

PRÉAMBULE

1. — Au cours d'une précédente étude (1), nous avons pu constater que le système juridique musulman — nommément le droit hanafite — a été élaboré à partir des cas particuliers et par le moyen de l'analogie. C'est parce que le droit musulman exclut tout recours au droit naturel qu'il a dû être construit à base de textes et l'analogie a pu ainsi être consacrée comme une source formelle du droit.

Mais nous avons déjà pu entrevoir que les jurisconsultes hanafites ont, malgré tout, été acculés à recourir à d'autres notions aux fins de corriger les rigueurs de l'analogie. C'est ainsi que la notion d'*istiḥsān* a vu le jour. Elle est à la source d'un très grand nombre de solutions qui font partie intégrante du *corpus juris* musulman hanafite.

Nous nous proposons, dans la présente étude, d'essayer de cerner la nature véritable de cette notion d'*istiḥsān* qui a joué un rôle considérable dans la formation du droit hanafite.

2. — Dans une première partie, nous exposerons le point

(1) Dans *Studia Islamica*, XXIII.

de vue des *uṣūlistes* du *fiqh* hanafite. Ces auteurs ont essayé de construire une théorie des sources du droit. Ils ont dû donc affronter le problème de l'*Istiḥsān* et examiner le bien-fondé de cette notion.

Mais il ne faut jamais l'oublier, ces auteurs ont travaillé, après coup, sur une matière fournie par les *furū'istes*, soit par les auteurs d'ouvrages de pur droit. Ce sont les solutions données par ces derniers auteurs qui doivent, en dernière analyse, servir de base pour déterminer la nature profonde de l'*istiḥsān*. C'est pourquoi nous consacrerons la deuxième partie de notre étude à l'examen de certains cas typiques d'*istiḥsān*.

A la lumière de cette analyse des cas, nous pourrons porter une appréciation sur la valeur de l'effort tenté par les *uṣūlistes*, et, en même temps, déceler le rôle précis joué par l'*istiḥsān* dans l'élaboration du droit positif musulman hanafite.

* * *

Première partie

LA NOTION D'*ISTIḤSĀN* CHEZ LES THÉORICIENS DU DROIT HANAFITE

3. — Si nous remontons à AL-KARKHĪ ((† 340 H.), (v. TAFTĀZĀNĪ, *al-Talwīḥ*, p. 572), nous trouvons cette première définition de l'*istiḥsān :* l'*istiḥsān* consiste à renoncer, dans un cas, à donner la solution admise dans des cas similaires — et ce, en considération d'une raison plus forte *(bi-wadjh huwa aqwā)*.

Ainsi, nous sommes mis tout aussitôt devant ce phénomène riche de conséquences : une solution nouvelle qui ne tire pas sa source de l'analogie. L'analogie est écartée, de propos délibéré, pour céder la place à une autre source. Mais quelle est la raison majeure pour laquelle on abandonne l'application d'une solution adoptée par ailleurs ? AL-KARKHĪ se garde bien de nous le dire ! Il se contente d'exiger une justification ayant une force plus grande que celle de l'analogie.

4. — AL-DJAṢṢĀṢ († 370 H.), (v. MUḤAMMAD MUṢṬAFĀ CHALABĪ, *Ta'līl al-aḥkām*, Le Caire, 1949, p. 335), pour qui *l'istiḥsān* c'est toujours l'abandon de l'analogie, pour une

raison qui doit avoir la priorité, distingue deux modes d'*istiḥsān*. Dans une première figure, le cas à trancher présente deux faces : l'une de ses faces le rattache à une solution, et l'autre le rattache à une solution différente. En d'autres termes, l'opération de l'esprit dénommée analogie se heurte, en l'espèce, à une certaine difficulté. Elle peut jouer dans deux sens différents. Des similitudes se présentent dans l'un et l'autre sens. Pour résoudre la difficulté, le jurisconsulte fera prévaloir l'une des deux analogies sur l'autre. La balance doit pencher dans le sens que l'*istiḥsān* indiquera. Mais quelle sera l'idée qui inspirera cette orientation ? AL-DJAṢṢĀṢ parle d'indice *(dalāla)* sans autre précision et il admet lui-même que c'est là la forme la plus obscure de l'*istiḥsān*.

La seconde figure de l'*istiḥsān*, d'après AL-DJAṢṢĀṢ, se réalise lorsque la solution admise dans les cas similaires ne peut être appliquée, en l'espèce, malgré la similitude certaine, et ce en raison de l'existence d'un texte, d'une tradition, d'un *consensus omnium*, d'un usage, ou d'une autre analogie.

Il est clair pourtant qu'en l'occurrence d'un texte, d'un usage ou d'un *consensus omnium*, la solution dérogatoire adoptée ne saurait être considérée comme découlant de l'*istiḥsān*. Les textes, le *idjmā' (consensus)*, le *'urf* (usage) sont autant de sources distinctes et directes du droit hanafite. Pourquoi donc rattacher les solutions puisées dans ces sources à l'*istiḥsān?* N'y-a-t-il pas là une confusion regrettable ? On n'a pas manqué de le relever (TAFTĀZĀNĪ, *loc. cit.*, p. 572). L'analogie ne peut, d'un avis unanime, aller à l'encontre d'un texte ou d'un *consensus omnium*. Comment donc peut-on parler d'*istiḥsān* qui est une opération de l'esprit devant suppléer à la carence de l'analogie, alors qu'il existe un texte ou une opinion communément reçue ?

Nous croyons trouver là la preuve que le droit musulman hanafite a été entièrement construit selon une technique propre qui est proprement l'empirisme — abstraction faite des textes et des traditions reçues. Ces textes et ces traditions sont venus s'insérer dans le corps constitué de ce droit pour en corriger les solutions et pour l'adapter à une certaine morale. C'est pourquoi les solutions dictées par ces textes et traditions sont, tout autant que les autres, des solutions particulières. Si elles contredisent

l'analogie, elles seront admises comme telles, et non point comme découlant d'une source supérieure.

C'est pourquoi aussi AL-DJAṢṢĀṢ considère la solution admise contrairement à celle que dicte l'analogie comme rentrant dans la seconde figure de l'*istiḥsān*. L'analogie est mise sur le même pied que les autres sources formelles du droit positif hanafite. Dans la première figure, l'*istiḥsān* a permis de préférer une analogie à une autre analogie. L'opération s'est déroulée à l'intérieur de la notion d'analogie. Par contre, dans la seconde figure, l'analogie est mise nettement de côté : le raisonnement a suivi une autre voie. Là, l'*istiḥsān* proprement dit apparaît dans toute son ampleur (1).

On peut donc inférer de l'étude du texte d'AL-DJAṢṢĀṢ qu'il existe deux degrés de l'*istiḥsān*. L'*istiḥsān* du premier degré se borne à faire prévaloir une analogie sur une autre. Le second degré de l'*istiḥsān* s'écarte complètement de toute analogie pour aboutir à une solution qui ne se fonde pas sur une similitude quelconque. Dans les deux cas, cependant, il est fait appel à une notion incertaine qui n'a point été déterminée par AL-DJAṢṢĀṢ.

5. — AL-BAZDAWĪ, et tous les *uṣūlistes* hanafites classiques, ne vont pas donner de l'*istiḥsān* une définition plus explicite. Tous leurs efforts vont tendre à émousser le caractère distinctif de l'*istiḥsān*. Pour faire face à la polémique déclenchée par AL-CHĀFI'Ī qui a nié toute valeur à l'*istiḥsān* comme source de droit, ils s'évertuent à intégrer l'*istiḥsān* dans le concept de *qiyās* ou analogie.

C'est ainsi que pour AL-BAZDAWĪ, (V. 'ABD AL-WAHHĀB KKALLĀF, *Uṣūl*, p. 57), l'*istiḥsān*, c'est une analogie plus forte que l'analogie appelée *qiyās*. Adopter une solution par voie d'*istiḥsān*, c'est renoncer à la solution induite par voie d'analogie, pour une solution qu'exige une analogie plus forte *(qiyās aqwā)*. On a fini ainsi par distinguer deux sortes d'analogie : l'analogie évidente *(qiyās djalī)* et l'analogie cachée *(qiyās khafī)*. Pour déguiser l'opération de l'esprit qui consiste à faire table rase

(1) Mais AL-DJAṢṢĀṢ l'appelle : « une autre analogie » *(qiyās ākhar)*.

de toute induction, on l'a affublée de ce qualificatif : « *khafī* ». Au fait, on passe d'une solution à une autre, dans deux cas semblables, sans raison apparente : à savoir, sans exciper d'une similitude quelconque. Le *qiyās* étant la seule source rationnelle reconnue en droit par les chafi'ites eux-mêmes, force fût, pour les hanafites, d'incorporer l'*istiḥsān* dans le concept de *qiyās*, quitte à le qualifier d'analogie cachée.

Et c'est ainsi qu'AL-SARAKHSĪ († 490 H.), dans son grand traité de droit hanafite (*al-Mabsūṭ*, t. X, p. 145) déclare, au Livre de l'*Istiḥsān*, qu'en vérité l'*istiḥsān* est tout autant une analogie que le *qiyās* lui-même. La seule différence est que le premier est une analogie cachée et plus forte.

6. — Au fait, l'*istiḥsān* se distingue nettement de l'analogie. La solution que dicte l'*istiḥsān* prend le contre-pied de celle qu'impose l'analogie. L'une est à l'antipode de l'autre (1).

L'*istiḥsān*, il est vrai, suppose la préexistence d'une solution obtenue par la voie de l'analogie. L'*istiḥsān* apportera une solution différente qui devra se substituer à la première.

Elle viendra la remplacer, soit en vertu d'un texte, d'une tradition, d'un usage, soit en vertu d'une opération propre de l'esprit qui va à la recherche d'une solution — en cas d'absence de texte, de tradition ou d'usage.

Mais quelle est l'idée directrice qui inspirera à l'esprit cette solution — ou qui a inspiré la solution déjà posée contrairement aux règles de l'analogie ? Telle est la question qu'il nous faut aborder maintenant.

7. — Il règne, chez les *uṣūlistes*, une grande incertitude sur le motif déterminant qui doit inspirer la solution dite d'*istiḥsān*.

TAFTĀZĀNĪ rapporte une définition célèbre qui rattache la solution à un indice *(dalīl)* qui surgit dans l'esprit du jurisconsulte *(mudjtahid)* et qu'il lui est difficile d'exprimer *(ya'suru 'alayhi l-ta'bīr 'anhu)*, (v. *Talwīḥ*, p. 572). C'est une sorte d'intuition qui le mène vers la solution la meilleure.

Il est certain cependant que l'*istiḥsān* repose sur un *wadjh*, soit sur une justification. Si le jurisconsulte n'en est pas conscient

(1) KĀSĀNĪ, *Badā'i'*, V, 154 : « Le *qiyās* : son contraire est l'*istiḥsān* ».

il n'en demeure pas moins vrai que le sentiment qui l'inspire n'est pas étranger aux exigences de toute organisation juridique : à savoir la considération des circonstances de l'espèce, des intérêts en jeu, de leur importance.

AL-SARAKHSĪ (*Mabsūṭ*, X, 145) nous dira explicitement que, pour ABŪ ḤANĪFA, abandonner l'analogie pour l'*istiḥsān* c'est rechercher ce qui est plus convenable *(awfaq lil-nās)*. Il ajoute que l'*istiḥsān* invite à rechercher la solution la plus facile *(al-suhūla)* et à éviter la rigueur,en lui préférant la tolérance *(samāḥa)*. La solution d'*istiḥsān* serait la solution qui considère avec bienveillance *(rifq)* le cas examiné. Ce sont là autant d'indications qui permettent une approche de la notion d'*istiḥsān*. Le *ḥasan*, c'est le bien, c'est ce qui est bon, si l'on considère le cas spécial soumis à l'examen avec bienveillance.

Mais au lieu de nous en tenir à ces pures indications abstraites, il sera plus utile de passer en revue les cas les plus typiques où le droit hanafite pose des solutions d'*istiḥsān*. Nous pourrons ainsi déduire du droit positif lui-même la nature exacte du concept d'*istiḥsān*.

* * *

Deuxième partie

LES CAS D'*ISTIḤSĀN* DANS LES OUVRAGES DE DROIT

8. — Les plus anciennes collections de droit hanafite font déjà un ample usage de l'*istiḥsān*.

ABŪ YŪSUF († 183 H.), dans son ouvrage sur *al-Kharādj* (l'impôt foncier), invoque fréquemment l'*istiḥsān* à l'appui de maintes solutions (v. SCHACHT, *Origins*, p. 111 ; et SANTILLANA, *Istituzioni*, I, p. 71). De même en est-il de CHAYBĀNĪ († 189 H.), dans ses divers ouvrages. GOLDZIHER en a déjà cité plusieurs exemples pris dans *al-Djāmi' al-ṣaghīr* (v. SCHACHT, *loc. cit.*).

Dans le grand ouvrage de CHAYBĀNĪ dénommé *al-Mabsūṭ* ou *al-Aṣl*, et qui constitue la première collection exhaustive de droit hanafite, nous avons pu recenser les divers cas d'*istiḥsān* admis en matière de vente (le Livre des Ventes du *Aṣl* de CHAY-

BĀNĪ a été édité par nous, au Caire, en 1954). Ils s'élèvent au nombre de trente-six, sur un ensemble de 681 cas. La solution est alors rapportée et suivie (si elle n'est pas précédée) de la mention : « *astaḥsinu dhālik* » (je trouve cela bien) et « j'abandonne ici l'analogie » *(wa ada'u l-qiyās fīhi)*. (V. cas I, 8 ; cas XII, 8 ; cas XIV, 28 ; etc.).

D'une manière générale, aucune justification n'est donnée. Il n'est point fait état du *wadjh* de la solution, soit de sa motivation. Il faut d'ailleurs faire observer que le *Mabsūṭ* de CHAYBĀNĪ est une suite de solutions qui ne sont presque jamais accompagnées d'explications. Mais lorsque la solution d'*istiḥsān* repose sur un texte ou une tradition, notre auteur prend soin de l'indiquer (v., par exemple, le cas IV, 5 : *taraknā dhālika li-l athar*).

Il est donc clair que, depuis les premiers temps, l'*istiḥsān* englobe toutes les solutions dérogatoires, que la dérogation soit ou non justifiée par un texte.

Il faut ainsi rechercher à travers la solution elle-même la *ratio* qui justifie la dérogation et l'abandon de l'analogie.

Nous examinerons, pour ce faire, quelques cas typiques, pris dans la doctrine hanafite dans son ensemble. Nous nous bornerons, malgré tout, au domaine du droit privé pour ne pas trop élargir le champ de nos investigations, et parvenir ainsi, en approfondissant l'étude des cas, à déceler la technique précise qui a présidé à l'élaboration des solutions dites d'*istiḥsān*.

SECTION I

Droit des personnes

9. — L'on sait que la prodigalité est un chef d'interdiction en droit musulman. La personne interdite pour cause de prodigalité ne saurait, en principe, consentir un acte à titre gratuit. D'où la prohibition de l'acte constitutif de *waqf*. Cet acte comme toute autre libéralité doit donc être considéré comme inefficace. Telle est la solution que dicte l'analogie.

Par voie d'*istiḥsān*, il a été admis que si le *waqf* est constitué par le prodigue, il sera considéré comme tirant son plein et entier effet au cas où le bénéficiaire serait le prodigue lui-même.

Il est certain que, dans ce cas, le prodigue se dépouille de la propriété de son bien, et, de ce chef, la rigueur de l'analyse juridique exige qu'un tel acte lui soit interdit.

Mais le fait est que, dans ce cas précis, l'usufruit du bien constitué en *waqf* lui demeure acquis sa vie durant. L'aliénation de son bien, au lieu de lui porter préjudice, l'assure, plutôt, contre sa propension à dilapider. La raison d'être de l'interdiction disparaît dans ce cas précis. Appliquer la solution qu'impose l'analogie aboutirait au résultat que précisément cette solution veut éviter (v. sur ce cas : KHALLĀF, *Masādir al-Tachrīʿ al-islāmī*, Le Caire, 1955, p. 61).

Nous avons là un exemple frappant qui montre que l'application stricte et rigoureuse de la solution posée par le droit peut aboutir, dans un cas précis. à un résultat contraire à celui qui a été voulu par la loi. La solution d'*istiḥsān* viendra corriger la rigueur de la loi, mais en s'insérant dans l'esprit de la loi. Elle fait appel à la *ratio legis* sur laquelle se fonde la solution analogique elle-même. Le but ultime envisagé par la loi, alors qu'il n'est pas exprimé dans la solution analogique, doit toujours guider le jurisconsulte dans sa recherche. Si la solution qu'il pose va à l'encontre de l'analogie, mais réalise le but envisagé, cette solution sera préférée à la solution analogique.

10. — Le second cas typique relatif au droit des personnes, nous le puisons dans l'ouvrage d'ABŪ YŪSUF (*al-Kharādj*, p. 113, V. MUḤAMMAD MUṢṬAFĀ CHALABĪ, *Taʿlīl al-Aḥkām*, Le Caire, 1949, p. 331). L'on sait que le droit des successions exige l'identité de confession entre le *de cujus* et l'héritier : la disparité de religion entraîne la déchéance de tout droit à l'héritage.

ABŪ YŪSUF — qui admet la solution au cas où l'épouse musulmane devient renégate puis meurt laissant des biens à ses héritiers — en infère que l'époux n'aura point de part dans la succession. Telle est la solution que donne l'analogie. D'ailleurs, le reniement de l'islam entraîne la dissolution du lien conjugal : le mari perd de ce fait sa qualité d'héritier.

Mais au cas où l'épouse vient à renier sa religion, alors qu'elle est déjà atteinte du mal qui entraînera sa mort, l'époux aura droit à sa part dans l'héritage. Il est apparent que cette solution constitue une entorse à la règle qui empêche de succéder aux

biens d'une personne appartenant à une autre religion. Comment expliquer cette dérogation ? ABŪ YŪSUF avoue lui-même qu'elle va à l'encontre de l'analogie. Pourquoi donc l'a-t-il admise ?

Il est clair qu'ABŪ YŪSUF prend ici en considération le fait que le reniement *(ridda)* effectué au cours de la dernière maladie peut avoir été voulu en vue de priver le conjoint de son droit à l'héritage. C'est un cas de fraude à la loi. La fraude étant présumée, vu les circonstances qui ont entouré la femme au moment où elle déclare son reniement, le droit successoral sera appliqué nonobstant ce reniement. La solution d'*istiḥsān* vise, ici encore à assurer l'application de la loi dans son ensemble, alors qu'une application stricte de la solution analogique aurait abouti à une frustration de droit — qui ne saurait être admise dans un système juridique quelconque.

SECTION II

Le droit des biens et des obligations

11. — En matière de vente, si l'objet de la vente est un terrain agricole, le transfert de la propriété du terrain vendu n'entraîne pas de plein droit la cession des droits de servitude dont bénéficie le fonds ayant fait l'objet de la vente. Ces droits doivent faire l'objet d'une mention spéciale dans le contrat. Par contre, en matière de louage, ces servitudes passent au locataire sans besoin de mention spéciale. Il pourra en bénéficier pour jouir pleinement du bien donné en location. Nous avons là deux solutions différentes qui peuvent s'expliquer aisément, chacune dans son contexte : ni l'une ni l'autre ne sont considérées comme des solutions d'*istiḥsān*.

Lorsque la question s'est posée de savoir si la constitution d'un terrain agricole en bien de mainmorte *(waqf)* doit englober ou non les servitudes dont bénéficie le terrain, les jurisconsultes se sont trouvés devant les deux solutions rapportées ci-dessus. La stricte analogie qui part de l'idée que le *waqf* opère une aliénation tout comme la vente aboutit à l'exclusion des droits de servitude de l'acte constitutif de *waqf* — à moins de mention

spéciale. Mais, par la même voie d'analogie, et en partant de l'idée que le *waqf* n'entraîne point un transfert de propriété, mais une simple constitution d'usufruit au profit du bénéficiaire, on aboutit, en sens contraire, à inclure les servitudes dans l'acte constitutif de *waqf*, sans besoin de mention spéciale.

Comment en sortir ? Nous sommes mis là en présence de la première figure de l'*istiḥsān*, évoquée par AL-DJAṢṢĀṢ (v. ci-dessus, n° 4). L'analogie donne lieu ici à un dilemme dont seul l'*istiḥsān* peut nous sauver.

De fait, les jurisconsultes ont opté pour la seconde solution en faisant appel à l'*istiḥsān*. Cette seconde solution est, tout autant que la première, une solution analogique. Mais elle l'a emporté sur la première grâce à l'*istiḥsān*. Si l'on s'en tient aux considérations de pure technique juridique, les deux solutions peuvent également se défendre. Le *waqf* est une aliénation de propriété : c'est un fait certain. Le *waqf* se borne à constituer un droit d'usufruit au profit du bénéficiaire : c'est un fait tout aussi certain. Pour faire prévaloir la seconde solution sur la première, on a dû prendre en considération le point de vue pratique. Le bénéficiaire d'un *waqf* doit, pour avoir la pleine jouissance, bénéficier également des servitudes réelles, tout comme le locataire. L'en priver, c'est amputer son droit de jouissance d'un élément important. L'acheteur qui a déjà la pleine propriété du fonds vendu peut en jouir suffisamment à ce titre et, s'il tient à acquérir en même temps les servitudes attachées au fonds, il doit le demander et l'obtenir expressément de son vendeur. Ce sont là des considérations tirées du cas précis envisagé. La solution est donnée en raison de ces considérations ; et c'est par ce biais qu'elle se rattache à la solution admise en matière de bail.

On remarquera que cette solution réalise pleinement le but de la loi en faisant état des circonstances particulières de l'espèce et des intérêts en jeu.

12. — En matière d'obligations. nous retiendrons l'exemple suivant. Lorsqu'une chose est remise entre les mains d'une personne, à quelque titre que ce soit, cette personne est considérée comme ayant pris la chose sous sa garde : on l'appelle *amīn* Ainsi en est-il spécialement du dépositaire, du commodataire, etc. En cas de perte fortuite de la chose, cette personne ne sera pas

tenue pour responsable. Telle est la solution admise dans ces cas.

Cependant la personne qui prend livraison de la chose, en vertu d'un contrat de louage d'ouvrage, tel que le tailleur, le teinturier, etc., sera tenue pour responsable de sa perte, à moins que cette perte ne soit due à un cas de force majeure (V. KHALLĀF, *loc. cit.*, p. 61).

Ainsi donc l'entrepreneur qui est considéré, en principe, comme un *amīn* trouve sa responsabilité plus aggravée que celle du dépositaire ou du commodataire. L'analogie ne saurait permettre cette solution. Elle a dès lors été rattachée à l'*istiḥsān*.

Au fait, cette solution introduit dans le droit hanafite une distinction qui s'impose entre le cas de la *locatio operis faciendi* et les autres cas. L'entrepreneur doit veiller à la conservation de la chose appartenant au maître. Cette obligation doit découler du contrat même de louage d'ouvrage. A moins d'établir l'existence d'une force majeure, l'entrepreneur sera présumé en faute si la chose vient à périr. Le dépositaire qui rend un service à titre gratuit ne saurait être tenu de la même manière. Le commodataire, à qui le propriétaire a bien voulu remettre la chose sans qu'il soit tenu de payer quoi que ce soit, ne peut être mis sur le même pied que l'entrepreneur. Les auteurs disent bien que si la même solution était admise en matière de louage d'ouvrage, les gens seraient mis dans l'embarras, alors qu'ils auraient besoin des services de l'artisan et qu'ils craindraient, en même temps, que l'artisan ne soit pas assez diligent pour assurer la conservation de la chose. L'*istiḥsān* a donné, ici encore, une solution appropriée au cas précis envisagé, en prenant en considération les besoins de la pratique.

Mais il faut avouer que la solution ici donnée n'est point seulement une solution dérogatoire à une analogie. Elle vise à réglementer un contrat nommé d'une manière spéciale et aboutit à poser une règle de droit proprement dite qui s'intègre dans le *corpus juris* hanafite. (Cf., en droit romain, D. 19, 2, 62 et D. 19, 2, 33 ; 59).

13. — Nous n'irons pas plus loin dans nos investigations. Nous nous contenterons de signaler, avant de clore cette section, qu'en matière d'obligations, la voie dite d'*istiḥsān* a permis de légitimer plusieurs contrats nommés : à savoir la vente à terme

(salam), la vente à livrer *(istiṣnā')* (1), etc. Contre la validité de ces contrats, l'analogie jouait. Tous les autres contrats doivent, en effet, avoir un objet actuellement existant. Pour intégrer dans le *corpus juris* hanafite les contrats ayant pour objet une chose future, les auteurs ont invoqué l'*istiḥsān*. Mais dans la plupart de ces cas, l'*istiḥsān* était corroboré par un texte, une tradition, un *consensus* ou un usage.

Au fait, ce sont les besoins de la pratique qui ont imposé ces contrats aux fondateurs de l'école. Les exigences de l'analogie ont dû plier devant ces besoins. Les textes ou les autres sources invoqués ne font qu'appuyer et renforcer le *diktat* de la conscience juridique, qualifié par les auteurs d'*istiḥsān*.

Vu sous cet angle, l'*istiḥsān* aura enrichi le droit musulman d'une masse de dispositions et de prescriptions qui font partie intégrante du système juridique hanafite, en matière d'obligations. C'est parce que ces contrats ont pu être légitimés par voie d'*istiḥsān*, que les auteurs ont dû leur consacrer des chapitres spéciaux où ils se trouvent amplement réglementés.

Mais il ne faut pas s'abuser sur le rôle exorbitant ainsi assigné par les hanafites à l'*istiḥsān*. Comment les suivre quand ils considèrent le louage de choses lui-même comme un contrat en principe nul, faute d'objet actuellement existant — et valide seulement par le truchement de l'*istiḥsān?* (v. KĀSĀNĪ, *Badā'i'*, IV, 173).

14. — Si, dans ces cas, l'*istiḥsān* s'appuie généralement sur un texte, une tradition, un *consensus*, ou un usage, il y a là simplement, ainsi que nous l'avons dit, une preuve que le système juridique musulman entièrement construit sur la base de l'analogie, ne pouvait qu'étouffer à l'intérieur des limites étroites de la construction analogique. Il a dû, pour faire face aux besoins de la pratique, recourir à d'autres expédients qui se manifestent sous diverses formes, mais qui ont un dénominateur commun : la nécessité de corriger la rigueur de la logique.

C'est ainsi que des solutions d'*istiḥsān* ont été adoptées — alors qu'elles allaient à l'encontre de textes précis. Nous en donnerons, comme exemple, la vente consentie avec stipulation,

(1) KĀSĀNĪ, *Badā'i'*, V, 209.

à la charge de l'acheteur, d'une sûreté personnelle (cautionnement) ou réelle (gage) (1). Alors que la logique juridique exclut, en droit hanafite, la jonction de deux contrats distincts dans un seul *negotium*, et alors que cette logique se trouve appuyée par des *hadīth* connus, les besoins de la pratique ont imposé la validité de l'adjonction d'un contrat de cautionnement ou d'un contrat de gage au contrat de vente. Les auteurs ont essayé de légitimer cette solution en distinguant les conditions naturelles des conditions accidentelles. Mais déjà CHAYBĀNĪ (v. cas III, 5) avait considéré que c'était là une solution d'*istiḥsān*.

* * *

CONCLUSION

15. — Maintenant que nous avons passé en revue divers cas d'*istiḥsān*, il nous appartient de déterminer le sens exact de ce terme — à partir des solutions données elles-mêmes.

Nous écarterons d'emblée la conception adoptée par les *uṣūlistes :* il ne peut être question, dans ces cas, d'analogie — ainsi que nous l'avons déjà relevé. L'*istiḥsān* n'est point une analogie cachée qui s'oppose à une analogie évidente. L'*istiḥsān* fait fi de l'analogie pour adopter une solution qui ne s'insère pas dans les cadres tracés par l'opération d'analogie.

Nous avons pu également constater que la solution obtenue par voie d'*istiḥsān*, alors qu'elle repose sur un texte, une tradition, un *consensus* ou un usage, n'est pas nécessairement une solution dérogatoire, ainsi que veulent bien le suggérer certains théoriciens. L'*istiḥsān* a pu, à maintes reprises, créer des institutions. Il a donné lieu à des solutions qui sont venues s'intégrer dans le corps même du droit musulman hanafite.

16. — Qu'est-ce donc que l'*istiḥsān?* Certains orientalistes (SCHACHT, *Esquisse*, p. 53), s'en tenant à la conception suggérée par les *uṣūlistes*, traduisent le terme d'*istiḥsān* par : « approbation » ou « la préférence personnelle... qui l'emporte sur la

(1) V. CHAYBĀNĪ, *Aṣl*, cas III, 5.

stricte analogie ». Cette préférence serait inspirée par des considérations pratiques ou d'intérêt général ou d'autres considérations similaires (SCHACHT, *Origins*, p. 98 et p. 111).

Pour GOLDZIHER, c'est une sorte d'expédient qui rappelle l'adage romain : « *corrigere jus propter utilitatem publicam* » (Encyclopédie de l'Islam, V° *Fiqh*, p. 103, b).

Mais déjà JUYNBOLL (Encyclopédie de l'Islam, V° *Istiḥsān*) voit dans l'*istiḥsān* « un moyen de poser des règles de droit plus conformes aux exigences de la vie quotidienne, des conditions sociales et de l'équité ».

SANTILLANA (*Istituzioni*, I, p. 71) s'exprime encore plus nettement : *istaḥsana*, c'est faire prévaloir les considérations d'utilité pratique ou d'équité sur la rigueur du droit ou de la logique juridique.

17. — En somme, l'*istiḥsān* serait une notion complexe qui englobe l'idée de justice et l'idée d'utilité. L'utilité serait tantôt envisagée dans les limites des intérêts en jeu et tantôt d'une manière générale. Mais l'intérêt général se confondrait alors avec le bien commun et nous rejoignons ainsi l'idée de justice.

L'*istiḥsān* ne serait-il pas tout simplement l'équité *(aequitas)* ou l'*epikeia* des grecs ?

Le mot « équité », écrit François GÉNY (*Méthode d'interprétation et sources en droit privé positif*, II, p. 109), « représente une notion, quelque peu incertaine et équivoque, que rien ne paraît distinguer bien nettement de la notion de justice ». Ce serait une « branche détachée du grand arbre de la justice ». C'est, ajoute-t-il, en un sens, « une sorte d'instinct qui, sans faire appel à la *raison raisonnante*, va, de lui-même et tout droit, à la solution la meilleure et la plus conforme au but de toute organisation juridique ». Dans un autre sens, c'est, « en vue de l'adaptation aux faits de l'idée de justice, la considération des circonstances individuelles, prenant le pas sur les idées générales ou les modelant à la mesure des éléments concrets ».

C'est là la conception aristotélicienne et thomiste de l'équité (SAINT THOMAS D'AQUIN, *Somme théologique*, 2°, 2, 9 ; 80 et 4 m.). Elle serait quelque chose de supérieur à toute formule écrite ou traditionnelle (V. GÉNY, I, p. 36, n° 17 et CARDAHI, *L'équité en droit comparé*, p. 8) qui nous fait trouver et accomplir ce qu'exige

la loi naturelle pour le bien commun. Comme l'écrit St THOMAS D'AQUIN (Q. 96, art. 6) : « S'il se présente un cas où l'observation de telle loi soit préjudiciable à l'intérêt général, celle-ci ne doit pas être observée ».

18. — Il est incontestable que pour les théoriciens du droit musulman eux-mêmes, l'*istiḥsān* serait cet instinct qui nous dicte, dans un cas précis, la solution la meilleure (v. *supra*, n° 7, la définition de l'*istiḥsān* selon certains *uṣūlistes*). Des auteurs musulmans modernes (CHALABĪ, *loc. cit.*, p. 348), en faisant le recensement des solutions d'*istiḥsān*, les ont rattachées tantôt à l'idée d'utilité, tantôt à l'idée de nécessité. Ils font également état de la notion de tolérance. Les considérations qui inspirent la solution sont donc variables et c'est pourquoi la nature de l'*istiḥsān* demeure incertaine et équivoque

Nous avons déjà relevé, dans une étude antérieure (*Studia Islamica*, fasc. XXIII, p. 10), que les auteurs musulmans n'ont jamais eu à considérer la conformité ou la non-conformité de la loi positive à la notion de justice ou aux principes du droit naturel. Pas de loi dans la nature, déclare expressément GHAZĀLĪ. Le bien et le mal n'existant pas en soi, on peut se demander : comment peut-on admettre que, par la voie de l'*istiḥsān*, il soit loisible de rechercher ce qu'est le *ḥasan*, soit le bien ? La contradiction serait flagrante. Cette manière de concevoir l'*istiḥsān* doit être rejetée, pour la simple raison qu'elle s'insère difficilement dans la structure de l'esprit même qui est à la base de tout l'édifice.

C'est pourquoi, d'ailleurs, la solution obtenue par voie d'*istiḥsān* ne comporte aucune certitude (KĀSĀNĪ, V, 225). Si elle repose sur un texte, un usage ou une nécessité, elle ne saurait valoir dans un cas similaire (SARAKHSĪ, *Mabsūṭ*, XII, 160 ; et KHALLĀF, *loc. cit.*, p. 63).

19. — Pour nous, l'*istiḥsān* n'est donc point tant l'équité, dans le sens aristotélicien du mot, que la « *benignitas juris* » des Romains. GAIUS, du fond de son Asie, écrit : « *Semper in dubiis benigniora praeferenda sunt* » (D., Loi 17 et Loi 56). « Ce sentiment, écrit M. P. LABORDERIE-BOULOU (*Benignitas*, in *Revue historique du droit français et étranger*, 1948, pp. 137-144), est assurément d'origine hellénique. Il pousse à l'adoption préférentielle de solutions plus bienveillantes. La *benignitas*, c'est la

bonté bienveillante... (c'est) une forme inattendue de l'*elegantia juris*. Elle est à l'opposé de l'*utilitas*. Elle est le contraire de la *subtilitas*. Elle constitue l'antithèse du *summum jus summa injuria* ».

C'est donc tout autant une notion juridique que l'analogie elle-même. C'est un autre mode de raisonnement qui viendra corriger les rigueurs de l'analogie (v. *Studia Islamica*, *loc. cit.*, p. 25). Il peut être à son tour considéré comme une source distincte du droit hanafite — que les *uṣūlistes* le veuillent ou non.

Dans cette nouvelle forme, l'esprit du jurisconsulte est acculé à rechercher la *ratio legis*, comme nous l'avons bien démontré dans nos exemples. Et c'est par là que l'*istiḥsān* se distingue du *qiyās* (v. *Studia Islamica*, *loc. cit.*, p. 21). C'est pourquoi la solution obtenue par la voie de l'*istiḥsān*, lorsqu'elle repose sur une simple opération de l'esprit, peut être étendue aux cas similaires (v. KHALLĀF, *loc. cit.*, p. 63).

Si l'analogie consiste à mettre en œuvre les dispositions précises de la loi pour en dégager des solutions voisines de celles des textes, l'*istiḥsān* cherche plutôt à extraire l'esprit des théories légales, en vue de régler, en harmonie avec celles-ci, les situations nouvelles (cf. GÉNY, *loc. cit.*, p. 131). Dans cette mesure, l'*istiḥsān* peut être rapproché de la *Rechtsanalogie* des Allemands, par opposition à la *Gesetzanalogie* qui serait proprement le *qiyās* (V. notre article dans *Studia Islamica*, *loc. cit.*, p. 24). Et c'est par ce biais que nous rejoignons la distinction faite par les *uṣūlistes* entre analogie évidente et analogie cachée.

Mais il demeure bien entendu que l'*istiḥsān* se distingue encore plus nettement du *qiyās* que ne se distingue la *Gesetzanalogie* de la *Rechtsanalogie*. Pour cette fois, les jurisconsultes musulmans vont se dégager, dans une certaine mesure, de leur empirisme et vont partir à la recherche de l'idée générale qui fonde la solution.

C'est pourquoi l'*istiḥsān* peut être considéré comme la forme qu'a prise la notion d'équité dans l'esprit des jurisconsultes musulmans. La *benignitas (istiḥsān)* est un aspect très humain du *jus est ars aequi et boni*. Elle se situe aux confins du droit et de la morale.

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